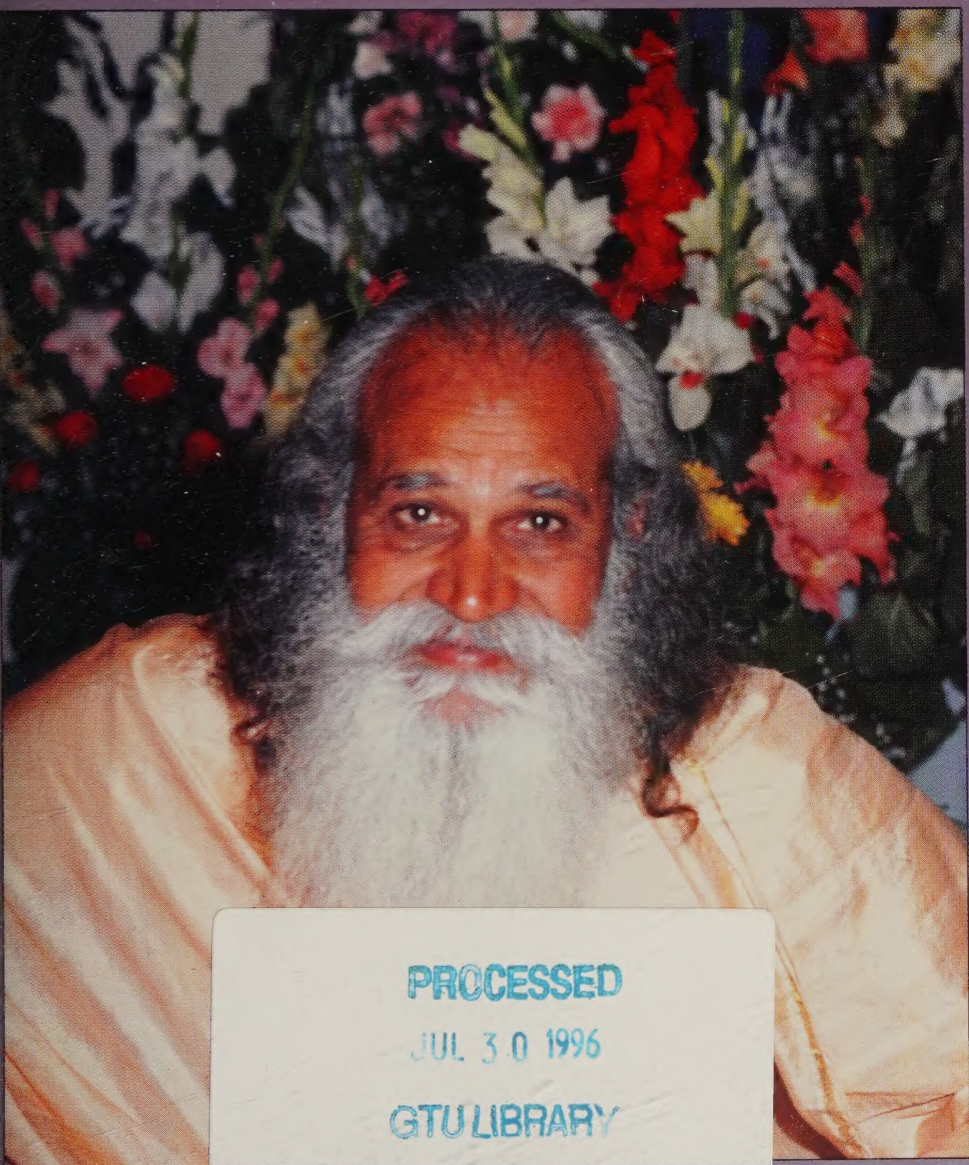


# YIntegral Yoga®

THE TEACHINGS OF  
SRI SWAMI SATCHIDANANDA

Summer 1996  
\$10.00



*Special Commemorative Vision of Peace Issue*

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# YIntegral Yoga®

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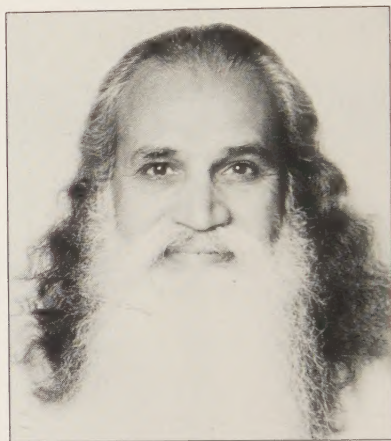
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Cover Photo Courtesy of:  
Swami Tyaganandapa



# *Dedicated to His Holiness Sri Swami Satchidananda*



Because he has let go attachment to the fruits of his actions, he is ever content and has no dependencies. Though he appears to be doing things (*karma*), actually he's not the doer.

Because he does not want anything for himself; and because he has control of his mind and ego; and because he does not consider possessions as his own, he is completely peaceful despite the actions of his body and mind (which move according to the forces of nature).

Because he is content with what comes of its own accord; and because he envies no one; and because he has gone beyond the pairs of opposites and maintains his equa-

nimity in success and failure, even though it appears that he is doing things, he is not bound by his actions.

When you let go all attachments and experience liberation, your mind becomes absorbed in the truth. Then, everything you do becomes a sacrifice (*yajna*), and all your *karma* melts away.

The offering itself is *Brahman*. The obligation is *Brahman*, which is offered by *Brahman* into the fire of *Brahman*; the one who sees nothing but *Brahman* in all that he does certainly realizes *Brahman*.

—*Bhagavad Gita*, (IV, 20 - 22)

**We humbly and joyfully offer this issue of *Integral Yoga* magazine in honor of the anniversary of Sri Gurudev's thirty years of service in the West and the auspicious occasion of Guru Poornima 1996.**





B6

# From the Editor



This year, we are celebrating two auspicious events: the thirtieth anniversary of Sri Gurudev's service in the West and the tenth anniversary of the Light Of Truth Universal Shrine (LOTUS).

Fittingly, the rubric that has been chosen to describe the celebration of these events is "Vision of Peace." For Sri Gurudev is a visionary whose wisdom and insights have enabled countless seekers, on every continent, to lead peaceful, useful lives by strengthening their bodies, purifying their minds, and opening their hearts. And he is also an apostle of peace who, by his unceasing expression of unconditional love and selfless service, has given us a glimpse of the power and glory of a life lived for others in and for Peace and Joy, Love and Light.

As is undoubtedly the case with all who have felt the "Master's touch," I, too, have experienced the transforming power of Sri Gurudev's love. From the moment that I came into contact with Sri Gurudev, I, like so many others, have continually experienced his miracles. Not so much the esoteric variety—although I've encountered those, too—but the everyday miracles that reveal the wonder of life and awaken us to the reality of our own Divine Nature.

To give an example, one rainy day, while Sri Gurudev was spending some time at the New York Integral Yoga Institute, I was asked to accompany him, with umbrella in hand, from the building to his car. I waited for some time in the hallway with another person. Suddenly, as though he appeared out of nowhere, Sri Gurudev was standing next to me in the narrow corridor, and although I never saw her leaving my side, the other person had disappeared from the scene. I was quite surprised, but before I could say

anything, Sri Gurudev held out his hand to me, with the palm up. In the middle of his palm sat a shiny gold object, which he offered to me. It was a New York subway token. Spontaneously, I thought, "Oh, I see. Gurudev is symbolically offering me a 'token' of his affection." Accustomed as I was to expressing my feelings vocally, I immediately began to verbalize the experience: "Gurudev, you're offering me a . . ." Sri Gurudev stopped me from finishing the sentence by gently putting his finger to his lips. And, without his uttering a word, I got it. He was teaching me, in his warm and playful manner, that the deepest sentiments do not always have to be given oral expression; that they can be communicated more directly and more subtly in silence.

Yes, the subway token seemed to me to have appeared miraculously. Perhaps. But the real miracle was the instantaneous refinement of an inveterate chatterbox. Sri Gurudev had guided me to the awareness that communication through silence leads to communion.

Another "miracle" occurred several years ago when I was very ill with a respiratory ailment that defied diagnosis. None of the many remedies that I had been taking for over a month worked. Finally, thinking that the illness might be tuberculosis, the doctor sent me to the hospital to be X-rayed. Weak and exhausted, I became fearful, imagining not only my own suffering and death, but the untold suffering and death that I might bring to others through this contagious disease.

Waiting in the lobby for my ride back to Yogaville, I began to cry and also to carry on a silent conversation with Gurudev, mentally sharing my thoughts, my feelings and my fears, and wishing that I could see him in person. After a few minutes, I lifted my head and happened to glance toward the door. On the marble wall next to the door, I noticed a large shadow. Through my tears—and fears—the shadow seemed



take the shape of Gurudev. I thought about how childish I must be to imagine such a thing, when all at once I saw what I thought was a vision of Sri Gurudev, literally right before my eyes. What a powerful vision, I thought, when, all of a sudden, the vision spoke to me! "Hello, Kumari; how are you?" As though awakened from a dream, I slowly realized that Gurudev was really standing there, on the physical plane, before me, and I answered, "I'm afraid, Gurudev." The doctor thinks that I might have TB." And he said, matter-of-factly, "Ah, yes; they also tell me that I'm going to die." There was no fear in his voice, only love, compassion and acceptance.

Immediately, all my fear left. I felt peaceful, free, full of joy, simply enjoying the moment. But, a few seconds later, I realized that we were actually standing in a hospital lobby, and I anxiously began to wonder what Gurudev was doing there. I started to ask him, but he quickly remarked that he was late for an appointment. He rushed off, disappearing as suddenly as he had appeared. Later on, Rev. Prem Anjali, Sri Gurudev's assistant, told me that she had

been puzzled as to why Gurudev had, that very day, suddenly decided to get a checkup at the hospital. Now, she knew. A devotee in need had cried out for help.

The power that Sri Gurudev radiates is the power of universal love. It is through this power that his vision of peace becomes reality. For the transformative influence of Sri Gurudev's teachings, together with his exemplary life, has brought physical, mental and spiritual well-being to thousands of aspirants from all walks of life and from every corner of the globe.

Thus, it is with profound love and gratitude that we humbly and joyfully offer this commemorative issue of *Integral Yoga* magazine in honor of the anniversary of Sri Gurudev's thirty years of service in the West and the auspicious occasion of Guru Poornima 1996. Om Shanthi, Shanthi, Shanthi.

In peace and joy, love and light,

*Rev. Kumari de Sachy*

Rev. Kumari de Sachy  
Editor

*Certainly if you have that kind of faith and devotion, God can speak to you. You can hear Him whispering. There's nothing strange about it. But you must make sure of one thing. God is not the only one that speaks to you. There's some other fellow inside who also whispers to you. That fellow is your own ego. You can hear the voice of your own ego. Then, of course, you would ask, "How can I distinguish between them?" There is a testing stone for that. When God tells you something it is for your benefit as well as for everyone else's benefit. Nobody gets hurt when God asks you to do something. It's good for all. But if your ego says something, there is always something sneaky about it. There is a tinge of selfishness. You have to get something first, "Don't worry about others. Get it!" Yes. So that is the testing stone. "Is it selfish or selfless? Is it for everybody's benefit or will someone get hurt by it?" If it would hurt somebody, God would never say that to you. God loves everyone equally. He's not interested in hurting someone else to make you happy. Remember that.*

— Sri Swami Satchidananda





## INTEGRAL YOGA® AND YOU

INTEGRAL YOGA® Magazine is the official organ of the Integral Yoga Institutes, Teaching Centers and Satchidananda Ashrams. In these centers the Integral Yoga teachings of Sri Swami Satchidananda are lived and shared. The centers offer ongoing programs in the various branches of Yoga—including Hatha, Raja, Karma, Bhakti and Jnana Yoga - as well as instruction in yogic diet and other related topics. There are open classes, courses, teacher training programs, universal worship services and retreats for both beginners and more advanced students. Resident programs, providing an opportunity to experience total yogic living, are also available.

A wide range of guest programs are offered at the Ashram in Buckingham, Virginia. Located at the Virginia Ashram are: the Audio-Video, Publishing and Distribution departments, the Fine Arts Society, the elementary school, an affiliated Credit Union, and the international coordination offices for all Integral Yoga centers.

The LOTUS (Light Of Truth Universal Shrine), a shrine dedicated to the Light of all faiths and to world peace, is open to the public and is located in Yogaville, Virginia.

For more information, to arrange an Integral Yoga program for any group, or to be put on our mailing list, please feel free to contact any of the centers listed inside the back cover of this Magazine. We are here to serve you.

## Letters To

You are my most beloved Self. You are light in a land of darkness and confusion. You light my way and take my hand to lead me on the thorny path of transcending delusion.

I am most blessed to have you as my guru, my guru, and my salvation. As night falls day, my ignorance continues to reassert itself, but you, in your holy compassion, continue to lift me up out of the quagmire of confusion to set me right, again and again. Your compassion and patience are inconceivable.

May your mind and body be filled with strength, health and vitality. May your principles be worthy of your teachings. You are Love itself. You need nothing. But may those who love you so much be capable of expressing that love so that you know how much good you are doing. How can I express my gratitude? For I love you in a way that is beyond words. I cannot even conceive of trying to get through this life without your teachings. To do so would be living in insanity, as most people on this earth do.

What else can I say? I lay my life prostrate at your holy feet. I know nothing. I do nothing. You are the doer. May I truly realize this to serve you better.

—  
Bedford



# Sri Gurudev

It is with gratitude in my heart that I write to you, gratitude for a glimpse into the heart of one who has scaled the heights to which my soul aspires.

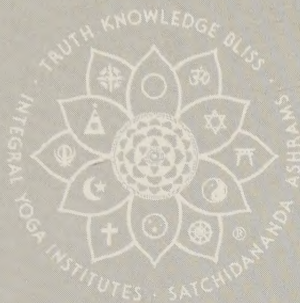
It is in being in the presence of sages such as you that the mind is consoled and the will to emulate is ignited to a spark. You touched something deep within me that I am not yet able to clearly fathom. Nevertheless, I do believe that it was a beginning for me. I cannot but blossom now that *Prakriti* has brought you into my life.

My husband joins me in expressing these sentiments. He was overwhelmed to see an ashram really functioning as smoothly and efficiently as Yogaville. The whole atmosphere is charged, as it were, with your presence.

I also want to thank you for blessing our son. It was a memorable moment for him as for us. He knows your entire *kirtan* and *mantra* tape and joins us every morning and evening in *satsang*. (How I wish that he could be a part of your Vidyalayam.) I would be remiss if I didn't mention how impressed we were with your children (your "angels") of the Vidyalayam—a shining tribute to the love, inspiration and guidance of a great sage and the tireless efforts of their teacher, Mrs. Raji, her husband and others.

In ending, I thank you for a memory and a feeling that we brought back with us, which we shall cherish forever.

—N, M & N  
Miami, FL



## INTEGRAL YOGA MAGAZINE

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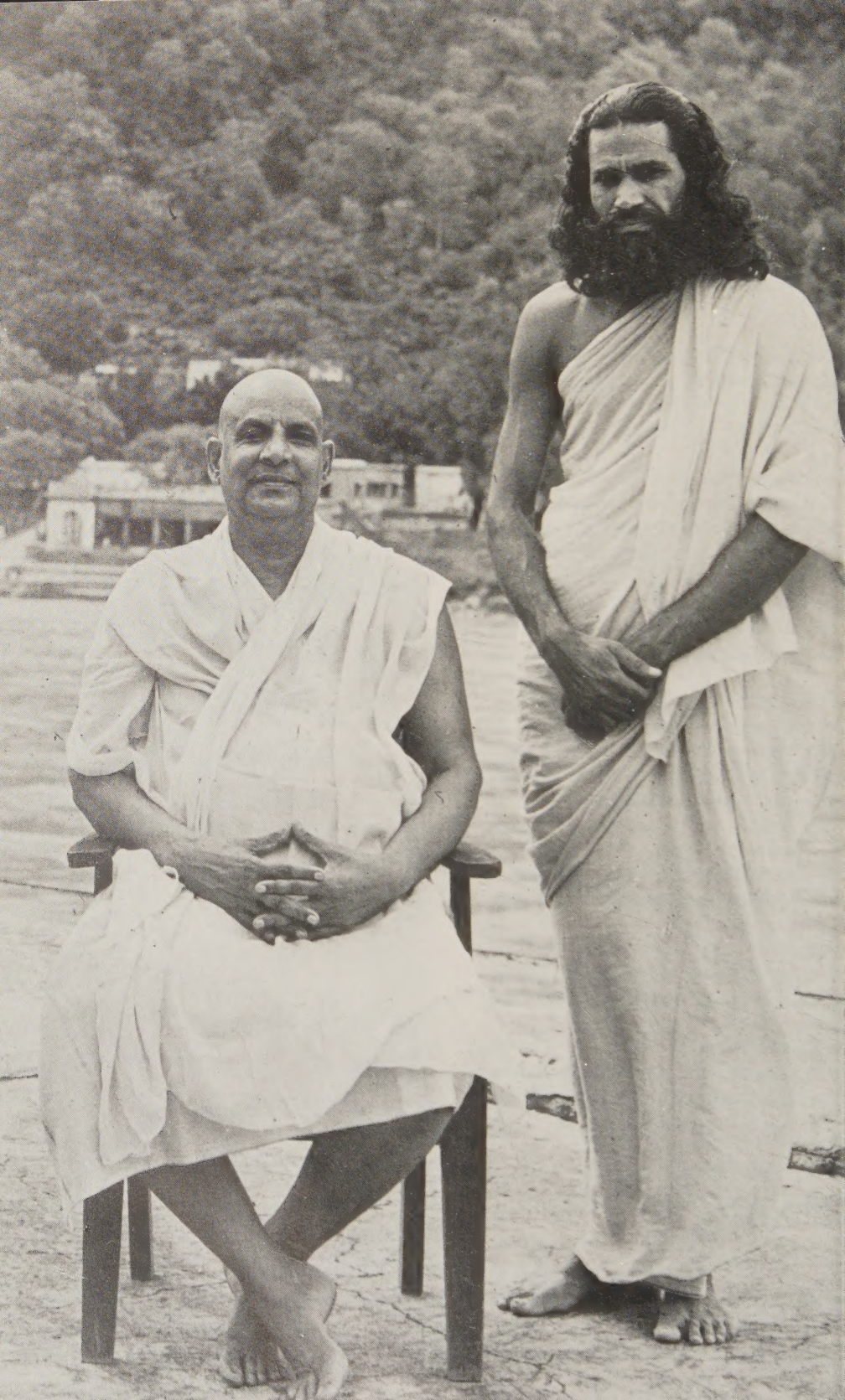
Swami Sharadananda

Rev. Prem Anjali, Ph.D.

## SRI SWAMI SATCHIDANANDA

(called "Sri Gurudev" by his students) is a master of Yoga, a world spiritual teacher, and Guru of the students of Integral Yoga. Dedicated to the ecumenical movement, his motto is: "Truth is One, Paths are Many." His main residence is in Buckingham, Virginia. In response to invitations from all around the globe, Sri Gurudev travels widely. Through every possible medium—lectures, conferences, radio, television and newspaper interviews, books and visits to centers around the world—he shares his knowledge in the fields of education, religion, health and Yoga.







# Guru and Disciple

by Sri Swami Sivananda

The relation between the Guru and the disciple is extremely sacred, everlasting and spiritual. There is no worldly relationship to which it can be compared. The true and ideal disciple's devotion to his Guru excels that devotion that an ideal child has for its parent, an ideal wife has for her husband, a most loyal servant has for his master.

A spiritual aspirant must revere and honor all saints. But the supreme *Guru Bhakti* he can have only toward one of them: his own Guru. To the ideal disciple, the Guru is the very embodiment of God. This deification of the Guru is not the product of the Hindu's blind faith and ignorant custom. There are parallels to it in the faith of other peoples.

For example, to the Japanese, the Emperor is a direct descendent of the Sun, their God. His word is law. The loyal Japanese will give up his very life at the command of the Emperor.

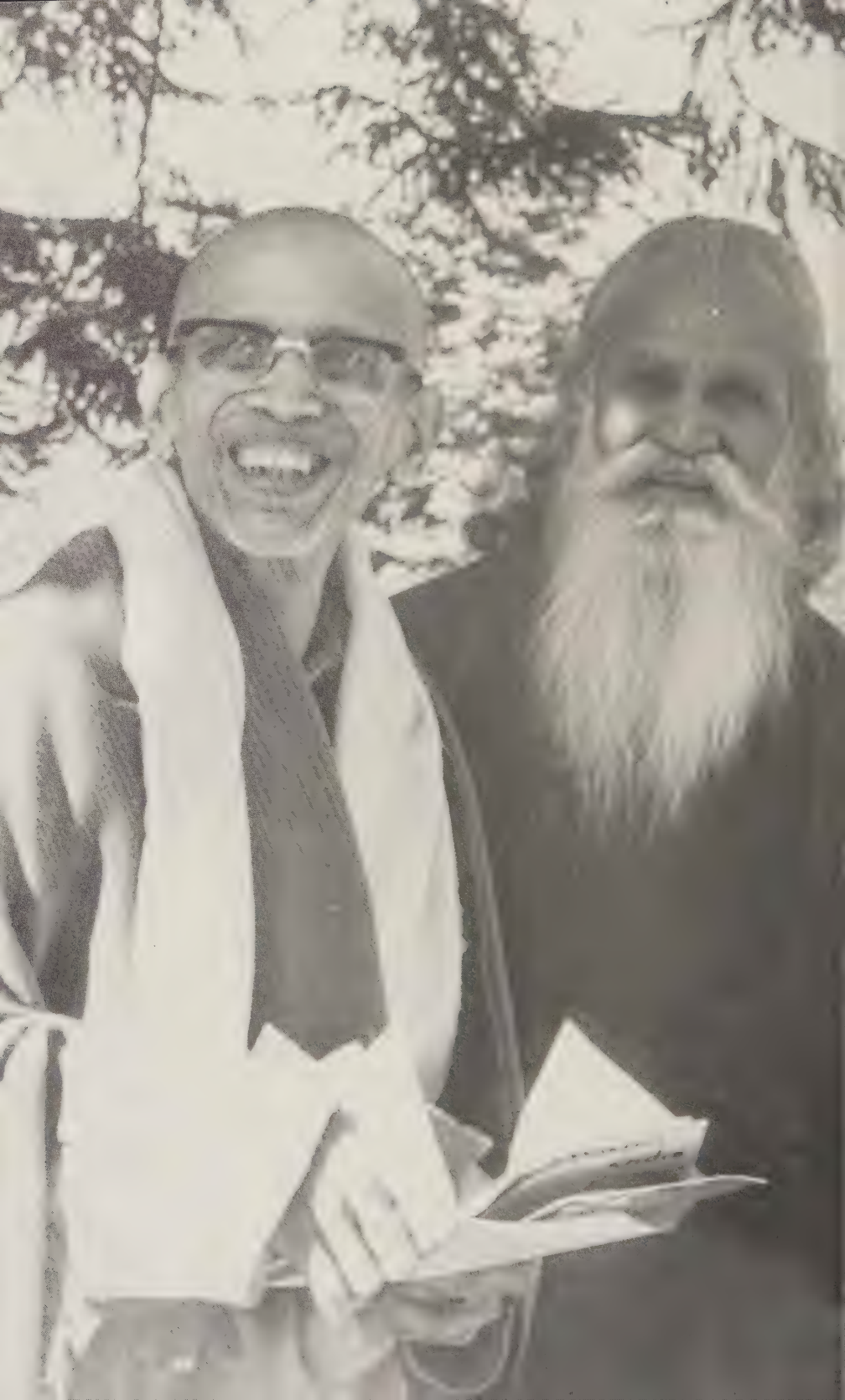
To the devout Catholic, the Pope is the direct descendent of St. Peter. His word is law. No sacrifice is too great in obedience to his command.

The disciple does not become a "slave" by obeying the Guru. He becomes the King of kings, *Atma-Samrat*. There is no other way to subdue the ego and annihilate it *in toto* except obedience to the Guru, service of the Guru, and humility. Therefore, *Guru-Bhakti* and *Guru-Seva* are indispensable for Self-realization. ■

"Through dynamic selfless service, you have won the hearts of the people of Ceylon. Your radiant personality and spiritual aura attract people to you; and your genuine humility and eagerness to serve all earns their admiration and affection. The newspaper reports reveal that your inspiring discourses command great respect and lead the men and women of Ceylon along the path of selflessness, unity and dynamic service to the goal of peace and prosperity."

—Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj,  
from a letter to Sri Gurudev,  
27 December 1957





# The Guru is His Teachings

by Sri Swami Chidananda

Radiant *Atman*! By the light of the sun, the whole world awakens. By the light of the sun, darkness is banished, slumber gives place to wakefulness and sloth gives place to activity. By the light of the sun, all beings in this world see things, perceive things clearly. In darkness, one stumbles and falls, loses one's way and is ever in danger of injury. In the light, one is able to proceed, move toward one's goals; one is safe from danger, all progress, all activity is temporarily suspended in darkness.

Thus, the sun is the awakener; the sun is the enlightener; the sun is the *marga darsaka* (one who shows the path). It is the sun that guarantees smooth, unimpeded progress toward each one's destination. When the sun is not there, one is, so to speak, blind, even though having eyes.

In the life of a sincere seeking soul, a spiritual aspirant, the Guru is, as it were, the sun. It is the Guru who awakens us from our slumber of ignorance. It is the Guru who, by his [or her] light, banishes the darkness of ignorance and wrong notions that the *jivatma* (individual soul) has about life and brings in the light of right reasoning, right perception and right thought. It is the Guru who also makes us see the way, through his own lofty, sublime personal example, through his own dynamic philosophy, through his own teachings and personal instructions.

It is the Guru who points out the path and makes us see the path clearly, pointing out the pitfalls and dangers upon the path and making us alert and vigilant. And, even as the sun initiates activity, so too does

the Guru inspire us to arise, awake, seek knowledge, attain illumination, and become forever blessed. All this and more the Guru does.

And the effulgence of the Guru, the radiance of the Guru, the light of the Guru is his teachings. It is his message, his instruction. These constitute the real Guru.

What is Guru's grace? It is not some mysterious something that comes out of him, as Gurudev [Sri Swami Sivananda] used to say, like water out of his *kamandalu* (water pot). His teachings, his admonitions, his instructions to us and his positive, im-

perative directives are the dynamic expression of his grace.

"Sleep no more; wake up; sit in *asana* (Yoga pos-

ture); do *japa* (repetition of a *mantra*). Meditate on the Supreme Being. Read one chapter of the *Gita*. Have *sattvic* (balanced) diet. Be simple in life; reduce your wants. Control anger through *kshama* (forgiveness). Observe *mauna* (silence) for some time every day. Speak the truth at all costs. Observe *brahmacharya* (continence). Do charity every day, according to your ability. Introspect; find out your defects and remove them. Draw inspiration from elevating, inspiring *svadhyaya* (spiritual study); daily *svadhyaya* will increase your knowledge and wisdom; your mind will become transformed and your heart purified, elevated and inspired. Read the lives of saints. Thus, progress day by day."

In this way, the Guru gives practical suggestions and warns that these are all important spiritual canons that must be observed rigidly. You should not give any leniency to the mind. And if you do some-

**It is the Guru who awakens us from our slumber of ignorance.**



thing wrong, punish yourself. Great ones have progressed through this method only. These positive and imperative commandments, *adesa*, directives, to spiritual aspirants, sincere seekers, disciples, devotees, constitute *anugraha* (grace). They constitute *guru kripa* (Guru's grace). They constitute the light in our life, the light that illumines our path and that shows clearly the goal that we have to attain.

Thus, the Guru never passes away; the Guru is never absent. He is immortal and deathless and has come to teach us that we are immortal and deathless. As long as the sun and the moon and the stars continue to shine in the sky above us, the Guru is present in the lives of all beings in the form of his resplendent teachings. *Guru jnana-upadesa*, the wisdom teachings of the Guru, are our wealth and treasure. They represent for us visible *kripa*. They are for us and they constitute the ever-present light that shines and illumines our life and the path before us.

**...the Guru is  
never absent.**

Understand this clearly and walk in the light. Understand this clearly and know that the Guru is where there is reverence for his teachings, an eagerness to fulfill his teachings, and a keen desire to follow the path pointed out by him. Where there is an earnest, ardent and fervent wish to move along that path, to practice his instructions, there the Guru is fully present and *guru kripa* is fully present. The *anugraha* of the Guru enriches such an aspirant.

Jagat Guru Lord Krishna is not present before us now. We cannot sit before Him and ask Him questions, put our problems before Him; we cannot write him a letter and get His instructions in reply; we cannot telephone Him. He is not here. But as long as the sun, moon and stars shine in the sky, as long as the *Gita* is still a living treasure for humanity, who can say that Krishna does not live? Who can say that Krishna *kripa*, Krishna's *anugraha* is not here? Who can say that? Because He says that "I am present in the *Gita*; My light is in the *Gita*; *Gita* is My very heart."

There are millions of Buddhists all over

the world. Are they able to meet Buddha, ask Him questions, get replies, telephone Him? But, yet, how many inspired souls there are walking the noble Eightfold path and attaining enlightenment, Buddhahood. They do not walk in darkness who have made Him their light, the sun of their life.

Because they have the right perception, millions upon millions are benefited by the teachings of the great ones. We have the grace, their presence, their strength and force and power and light in our lives. Their words

are words of power. Their invisible presence is a force. *Jivanmuktas* (liberated beings) never die—*brahma brahmaiva bhavati*: the knower of Brahman verily becomes Brahman. He becomes

that which he has sought, the one supreme non-dual existence, *ekameva dvitiya brahma*. That the *brahma-jnani* (one who has direct knowledge of Brahman) becomes, and therefore, he pervades, he is ever present *sarvam khalvidam brahma*.

Put these truths together. The *brahma-jnani* is filled with Brahman, for *prajnana brahma-jnana* itself is Brahman. *Bodhi* (knowledge) itself is Brahman. *Prajna* (awareness itself is Brahman. And the enlightened one becomes *prajna*. He becomes Brahman, and Brahman IS, not was. Brahman is here, now. Brahman alone is; all that is filled with Brahman—*brahmaiva kevalam, sarvam brahmanamayam*.

God has given us intelligence and discrimination, *viveka* and *vichara*. Think, ponder, reflect deeply. See the truth clearly before you; live in the light of the truth and forever become blessed.

Thus, one should live a dynamic life guided by the light of the ever-present Guru's teachings. He dwells in, he works through, and, in the spirit, he is dynamically present in his *Guru jnana-upadesa*. That is the real Guru. Otherwise, even if he is alive in flesh and blood before us, if one does not have the reverence to follow his teachings, he is as good as not existing for you. Even if he does not exist, if you make his teachings the light and guide in your life, then he exists for you.

What is the sun if not its light? The sun is no sun if there is no light. The sun is the sun because it radiates perennial light, an inexhaustible, unbroken supply of light. Even so, the Guru is his *jnana-upadesa*.

Let us, therefore, rejoice that we have this treasure, we have this *karma*. We are walking in the light of lofty, luminous, illuminating and enlightening teachings. There-

fore, let us move with determination, enthusiasm, firm confidence and conviction that we shall attain and achieve in this very body, in this very life. For the force of the Guru, the power of the Guru infills us. The one thing needful is right perception, right understanding and right exertion. Then, everything becomes achieved. In time, everything becomes achieved. ■

## Immortal Words of Eternity

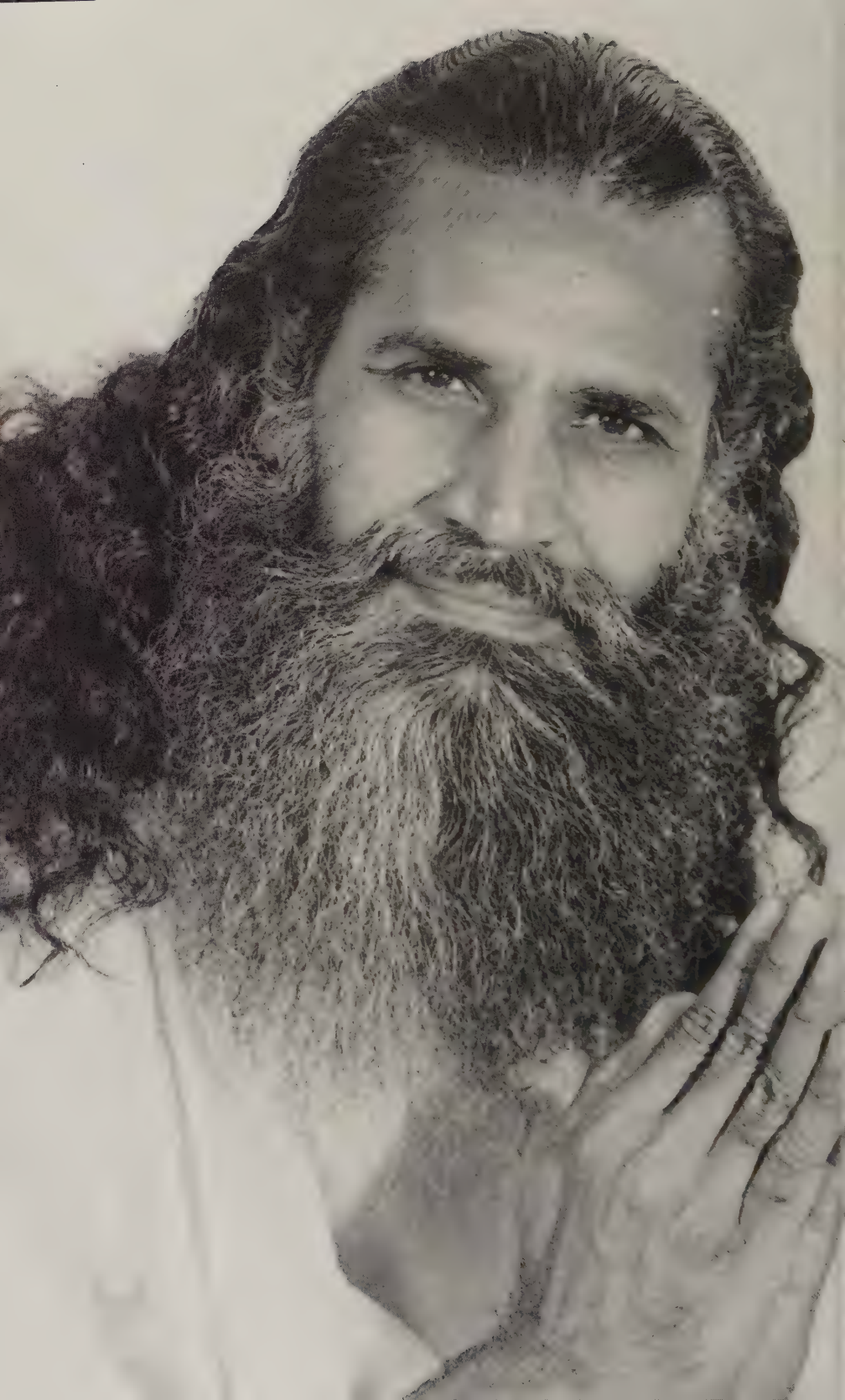
We may listen to grand lectures and splendid orations from the public platforms for hours together, but these discourses fail to produce any effect on us since we forget them as soon as our back is turned. And by this we are taught that Truth (Immortal Words) is not a mere theory to be merely shouted out from platforms for name and fame, without realization. Such words are mortal; hence, they elude our grasp.

On the other hand, the words that flow out sparingly from the burning heart of the "living Free" (*Jivanmuktas*, or liberated living souls) are immortal in their nature and well weighed. The *Jivanmukta* speaks a few words, and those words sink down into the core of our hearts. The words of the *Jivanmukta* breathe life into us and serve to help the blinded *Jiva* (soul) to an easy realization of its

own self-contained Light. The Divine Fire is in us already. And contact with the one who has realized the Self, the All, and a few words from him or her impart an electric stimulus, as it were, to our inner spirit, rousing it up to the height of its intrinsic greatness. They (the words) thoroughly stir our soul and wake us up to our native Holy Majesty. Books will fail to give us the Bliss of the Beyond because they are the words which we have spoken.

The infinite library of the universe is in our mind. A single word from a *Jivanmukta* is enough to unlock the shrine of infinite bliss in us. Such is the greatness of the Immortal Words of Eternity.

—Sri Swami Rajeswarananda,  
excerpted from "Immortal Words of  
Eternity" (*Divine Life*, 1/95)





# *Vision of Peace*

## *The 30th Anniversary of Sri Swami Satchidananda's Service in the West and the 10th Anniversary of LOTUS*

As many of you know, when Sri Gurudev is in residence at Yogaville, he answers questions at Saturday evening satsangs. During the satsang that was held on April 11, 1987, just nine months after the opening of the Light Of Truth Universal Shrine (LOTUS), someone asked Sri Gurudev: "Would you tell us about your background?" At first, Sri Gurudev jokingly responded: "My background, hmm? I don't know whether I have any ground at all!" And then he warmly yielded to the request.

### **HOW SRI GURUDEV CAME TO THE WEST (IN HIS OWN WORDS)**

I can just say that I am fortunate, in a way, to have been born into a family of pious parents. Father and mother, or mother-father, they were my first teachers. They instilled faith in God in my heart. And, somehow, from then on, I never worried about anything. Everything just fell into the proper places. Even while I was a little student, I always felt that God was guiding me.

From school I went into business. There, again, one after the other, I got my hands into everything—Jack of all trades and, even today, Master of none. Yes; I got my hands into everything: automobile engineering, electronic engineering, cinema-

tography, temple management, the agricultural field; a little bit of everything. Then, everything just naturally dropped away.

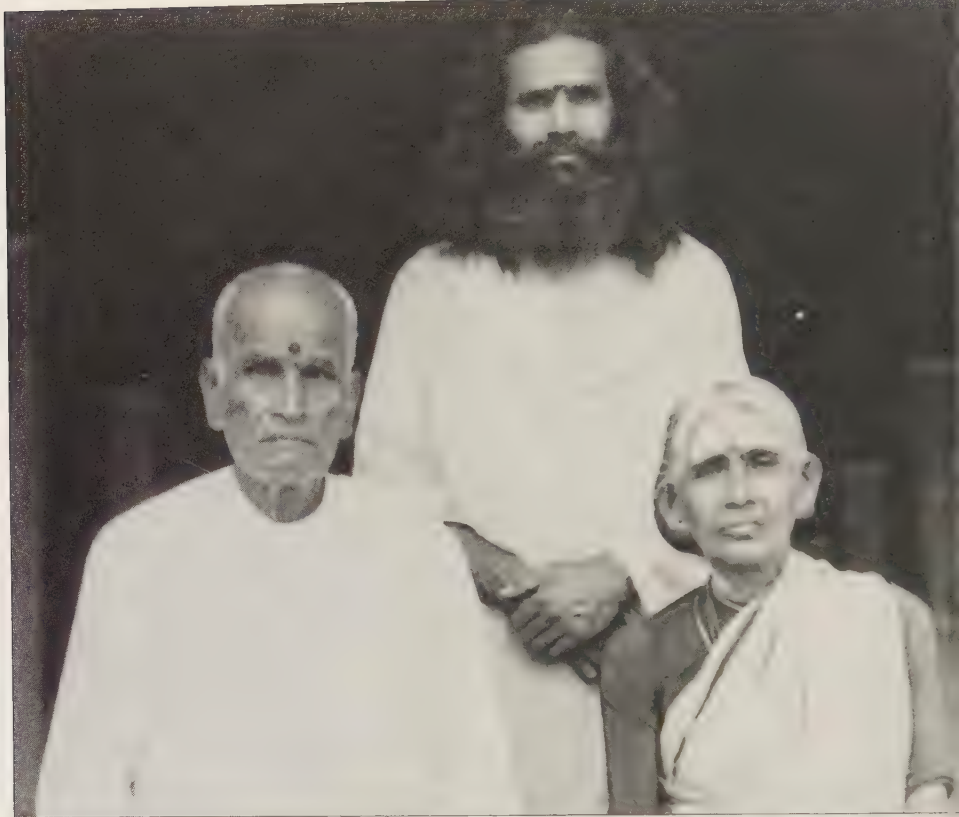
**I always felt  
that God was  
guiding me.**

One after the other. Luckily, our home was a place where almost all the sages and saints who walked that way used to come and stay. That's another great benefit that I got. Any time someone walked into my

childhood house, that person would always see some saintly person staying there.

We were able to serve these people, and they, in turn, were able to bless us or instill in us a little more of God's knowledge. So, naturally, when all my worldly jobs were over, I automatically went to the places of these saints and sages. I sat at their feet and learned a lot. For eight years, I stayed in various places, at the feet of many sages and saints. Ultimately, I heard of another great saint in the Himalayas. I went there to see him and that was, more or less, the culmination of my search. Swami Sivananda, well-known all over the world. He was a great ecumenist. People of all religions used to go to his ashram.

Even after that, I had no idea of going out to do anything—preaching, reaching. No. It just simply happened. Some devotees who came to Rishikesh, Himalayas, saw me. I don't know what they saw in me. But they wanted me to come to their country, Sri



*Sri Gurudev with his beloved parents, Sri Kalyanasundaram and Srimati Velammai*

Lanka. Maybe they thought that I could speak their language [Tamil] well. For some reason, they called me to come for a few months. I went there and got stuck for thirteen years! And from there, I was invited to Japan, Hong Kong, Manila, Bangkok, and other places. I went only by invitation. I went and came back.

After I had been in Sri Lanka for thirteen years, a filmmaker from America came to the area. You see how Providence works? The filmmaker, Conrad Rooks, happened to be staying in a nearby hotel, and he had been casually asking the hotel owner, "Is there anybody who can teach me a little Yoga?" The hotel owner was the mayor of the city, Kandy, and he said, "Why, yes; I do know of someone. I practice Yoga with him, and I can introduce you." And that's how Conrad Rooks came to know me. He was sort of a

skeptical and naughty boy. You know, '60s hippie. He called me and said, "I'm not going to take much of your time; fifteen minutes is enough. I have just one or two questions about kundalini and this and that." I said, "Well, fine; come. After 10 o'clock everyone at the ashram goes to bed, and I can give you a little time." So, he punctually arrived at 10 o'clock. For fifteen minutes he thought. And we started talking and talking and talking. All of a sudden, he looked at his watch; it was 4 o'clock in the morning. Something had happened. He wanted to stay with me; he didn't want to go back. Then, his lawyers, who had business in Paris, sent telegrams asking him to come back because there were some problems there. He went back, and after three or four weeks, without even asking me, he sent me a ticket to Paris. British Airlines phoned me and said, "The



*Sri Gurudev meeting with Conrad Rooks*

is a ticket waiting for you to go to Paris. When are you going?" I said, "I don't know; who sent the ticket?" The man told me the name, and I said, "All right. But I can't just leave everything and come right away. Give me two weeks." He replied, "Okay; anytime you say, we'll book you."

So, after two weeks, I came, thinking that maybe I would spend a month in Paris. But then, Conrad wanted me to visit other places, to meet all his friends. He wanted me to go to New York. I was to come to New York for two days. But the two days became

five months. Still, I couldn't stay continuously, even though they insisted, because my ticket was to expire. I couldn't stay any longer; the time for my departure was nearing. Everyone agreed that I had to go, but they said that they would see to it that I would return. I flew to Colombo, and who was there to receive me? The American Ambassador to Sri Lanka, himself, who was a close friend of mine. He said, "I don't know what you have done to our people in America. They have sent me letters and telegrams asking me to pack you up and send you back there."



*Sri Gurudev sharing his wisdom with his 1960s "hippies"*



And that's how I came to America. It was not anything that I did. Something, Providence, pushed me, pushed me.

Even after I returned to America, the students, as sponsors, could have easily gotten me a visa. But they went crazy, saying, "No, No. You should be here as a minister, on your own merit." So, they applied for a special category, that of religious minister. The American government had never before opened that channel to anybody. After a few months of dodging the issue, the Immigration Department finally replied: "According to our understanding, Yoga is not a religion, so he cannot be considered a religious minister, and we cannot issue the visa." That was the reply that came from them.

Immediately, everyone, including some rabbis, Protestant ministers, and Catholic priests, started writing to the Immigration Department. They all became close to me. There must have been about six hundred letters sent; a very big pile. As a result, the director of the department felt that he should at least see me in person, so he called me to come for an interview, and I went.

At the interview, the first question asked was: "Why do you want to live in this country?" I answered, "Sir, to be honest, I am not very keen about that." Exactly those words. The director responded, "What?!!! Am I hearing right? Are you speaking correct English?" "Yes, Sir," I said. "Then why did you apply?" I explained, "Sir, it's not me. All these people filled out the form. They wanted me to sign it, so I signed it. It's because of their pressure that I signed and requested to live here. It's not that I want to come and stay here or do anything. I am nothing."

The director said, "Do you know that in the history of American immigration, we have never come across a man like you, applying to come yet saying that you are not keen in having this visa." Then, of course, we had a longer conversation, during which

time he said, "I have a little difficulty, because, thus far, we have been sending missionaries to other parts of the world. We have never gotten any missionaries here. We don't need that. And if I say yes to you, I will have to answer to many of the people here, and I don't want to do that." I said

"Then, sir, if you don't want to say yes, then say no. I will not be at all unhappy. You are not saying no to me. You are saying no to

the others. There are other people who are looking for me to come to their countries. The director felt so bad about that that he said, "Well, I will send the pile of letters, the whole file, to the federal government. Let them decide, because I don't want to open a new channel."

Probably, by that time, the federal government knew about my work here, so as soon as the file went to their offices, someone called the director of the Immigration Department and said, "Please ask the Swami to stay here; we are processing his visa."

I'm not telling you this to brag about my greatness or anything like that. I'm simply telling you about my background and how I came here. What brought me here? You, God, Providence. Sincerely; I am nothing. In fact, compared to many people, I am not even a great scholar or a big man or even a thinker. All I know is that some unseen power is just making me do things and I am doing. I'm comfortable that way. That way I never have any room for anxiety, worry, or depression, or, even the other side of that, for excitement. Now, you might say, "Oh, here is this big community, Yogaville, with this big hall, filled with lots of people." Do you think that I'm excited about that? I still have the old suitcase that I came with. What do they know? At any moment, they can say, "He's not needed; we don't need you any more!"

For me it's whatever God wants. Even without all these organizations. I never go out to start something. Even the LOTUS.

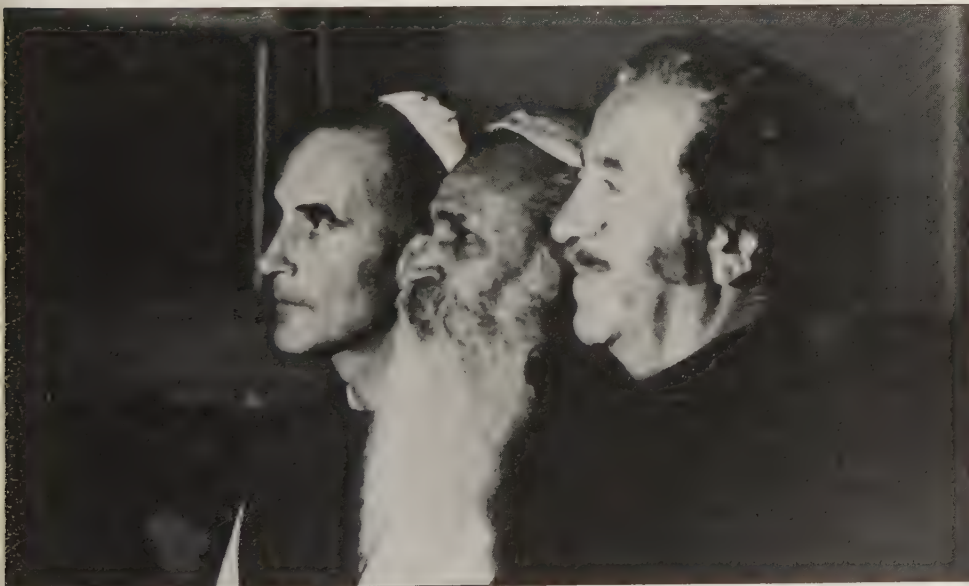
## **What brought me here? You, God, Providence.**

The one thing that I can say is that wherever I went, even to Sri Lanka, I became a very close friend of many other religious people, clergy. We used to gather now and then. I always felt terribly bad to see the world fighting in the name of God and religion. In fact, world statistics clearly prove that more people have been killed in the name of God and religion than for any other reason. It's a fact.

Is that what we want? Is that why we look for God and religion? No. If there is anything that could save the world, it is only God and religion. But, unfortunately, it is God and religion that are destroying the world. Every problem is based on the attitude, "My religion, your religion." Even within the same religion, it is, "My sect, your sect." Look at what's happening in the Islamic world, the Sunis and the Shiites. In Ireland, both Catholics and Protestants read the same Bible, yet they are killing each other. In Hinduism, a Siva worshipper will kill a Narayana worshipper. Nobody is bad. So why this insanity? Because we don't understand what religion is. It is religion

that should help us to understand the spiritual oneness, to make us feel more at home as one family. If there is anyone who separates another individual, saying to that person, "You are different from me," using religion to make that claim, then he or she is not a religious person at all; forget it. Thinking about these kinds of situations has made me pray, "God, use me in any way you want. I would like to see that in Your name we become one family."

Luckily, as soon as I came to America, within the very first week, I became good friends with a rabbi, Rabbi Gelberman. Then, Brother David Steindl-Rast, a Benedictine monk, also became a great brother. And, then, I became close to many members of the clergy; and we used to gather and talk. During one of the retreats that we attended, we even organized an ecumenical service, which we called "Yoga Ecumenical Service," (YES). We arranged an altar, and right in the middle of the altar, we placed a candle, one light as a symbol of God for everybody. All the various clergymen and -women sat around, offering service to that one light.



*Three "apostles of peace." Left to right:  
Rabbi Joseph Gelberman, Sri Gurudev, and Brother David Steindl-Rast*

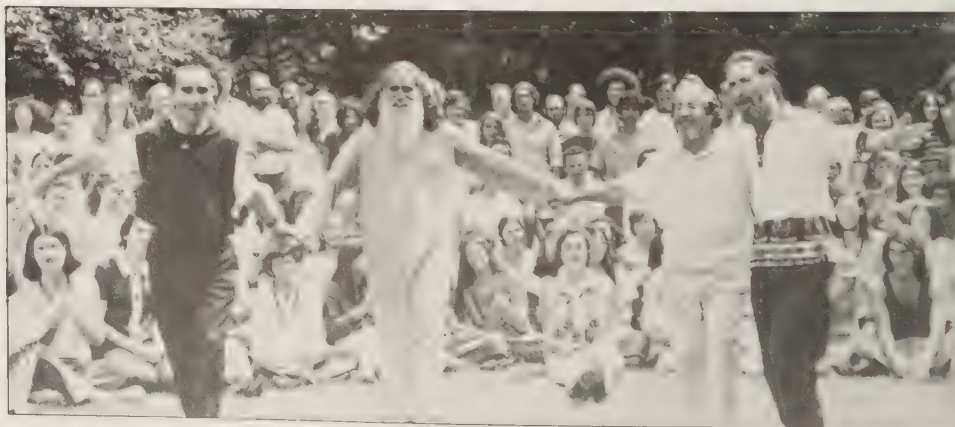


*Yoga Ecumenical Service, Yogaville-East, All Faiths Day, 1977*

We held these services for several years. Then, at some point, we wanted to have a permanent place, a sort of symbol; and, somehow, the idea came that this place should be in the form of a lotus. Soon, someone asked me, "Why in the form of a lotus?" I had thought that a flower is something beautiful and that the lotus flower is accepted as a symbol by many religions. So, the idea came: Why not make the lotus into

an acronym and say LOTUS? And, then, started calling it "Light Of Truth Universal Shrine." And that's how the idea of LOTUS came to be.

Even then, there was something celestial happening. Searching for a site, we located various places. We tried Santa Barbara, California, but it didn't work out there. Then, we started to work on a LOTUS at the Ashram in Pomfret, Connecticut. That didn't



*A dance of joy performed at Annhurst, Massachusetts, during the first of many ecumenical retreats. Left to right: Brother David Steindl-Rast, Sri Gurudev, Rabbi Gelberman, and Father George Maloney*





*Aerial view of LOTUS and Yogaville*

work out. We looked at various locations in the southeast, but we weren't happy with any of them. On the way home, I was taken by a small plane to the location in Buckingham, Virginia, that is now Yogaville. As we flew over this place, I saw the river and said, "Hey, this river seems to be attracting me. Is there any place like this close to

the river?" The realtor, who was also in the plane, replied, "Swami, this very land will be coming on the market within a week." Immediately, we landed there, somewhere on the farm. We searched to find the owner before he put the property on the market. "We'll buy it," we said. Somehow, Virginia had become the place. God brought us here.



*Yogaville. A view of the James River from the Overlook*

But where would the money come from? Previously, the great singer, Carole King, had donated her beautiful Connecticut ranch. I now told her that I would like to sell that property to buy the property in Virginia. She said, "Do whatever you want." Thus, the money was provided, the land was provided, everything just came.

And then there was LOTUS. Without even a cent in our hands, we began digging the lake. Some of you might think that when I dug the lake, I found some treasure. True. As we were digging the lake, I was digging into the hearts of many people. Many people simply heard about LOTUS and appreciated it without even knowing me. They said, "This is what we want!"

Contributions came from various places—from \$1 to \$100,000. Even today, I don't know who sent that \$108,000 from Canada. I don't even know. It was an anonymous contribution. And, like that, contributions came from India, from Europe. For example, there was a gentleman whose wife came to one of my retreats in Switzerland. He had been against her coming to the retreat. When he came to fetch her at the end of the retreat, he was introduced to me. He said, "Swami, you must be a good guy." I

asked him, "Why do you say so?" And he answered, "You know, my wife insisted on going to this retreat. I used my pendulum and the pendulum went around and around over your name in the brochure; so, I thought that you must be a good person" See? So not only did this man allow her to come, but he also came to fetch her. And he told me, I have heard all about LOTUS. I want to collect some funds for the project." Even without my doing anything, he collected some money in Switzerland, Germany and other places. What's more, he opened a Swiss bank account for LOTUS.

What does it all mean? If you start something that is dear to God and beneficial to humanity, it is God's business to take care of it. That's all I can say. Otherwise, who am I to build such a beautiful monument as this? It's unique in all the world. Nowhere in this world is there anything like it. Even the contractors had said, "You're crazy. We don't even know how the architecture will work out. We have never seen a building shaped like this." I told them, "You start. And, at any point, if you convince me that you cannot do any more, we'll stop it there. Even if it's halfway done, it doesn't matter because it is not my work; it is His work."



*Sri Gurudev's vision of LOTUS taking form*

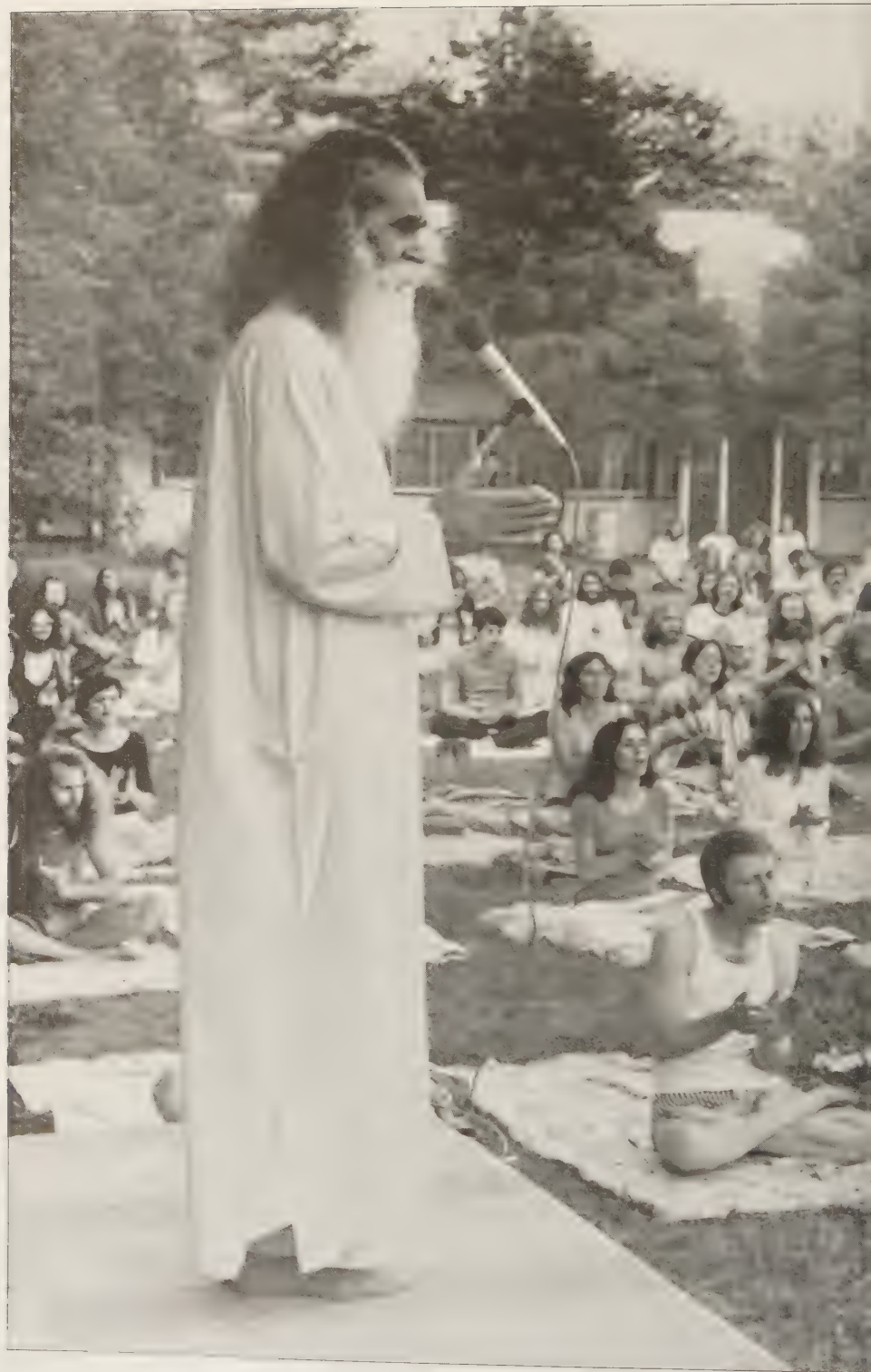


So, every minute, I see the Glory of God. Look what he can do with a simple, ordinary individual like me. That is God's Glory. If God had picked up an M. A., a Ph.D., a big scholar of theology, this and that, then it would have been nothing unusual. He just picked up an ordinary dry leaf to show His Glory. Even at this minute, I'm not expecting anything. "God, guide me." The next minute, "Make me do; I am doing; that's all. If you don't want me to do anything, I'll be happy to sit and sleep." In fact, sometimes my ego comes in. For the past few months, I decided not to do anything much here, and I told everyone, "You all take over and do everything. Let me just retire, and I'll sit and watch you." In a way, that's what I'm thinking that I'm doing. But, I'm surprised to see that my itinerary is fully booked. Just because I said, "I am not going to do anything more," now, within the coming few months, I have to travel to all the islands in Hawaii, come back, go to New York, come back, go to Boston, come back, go to Montreal, come back.

Even this morning, someone asked "Is that what you call "retiring?" That makes me feel: Who am I to retire? Whatever He wants me to do I should do. Even retiring is not in my hands. If He feels that I have done enough, that I am no good any more, then He will put me aside. So, my entire life is guided by that. Just give yourself in the hands of God, you don't have to worry about anything. Don't even worry about your toothbrush. He will bring it to you. Yes. I have seen that. Simply because I would say, "Ah, that's a nice toothbrush," the next day, somebody would give it to me. Yes. In my own life, in my own little, humble experience, I have seen this. The more you give yourself to God, the more you are free, the more you are peaceful, the more you are happy. And God can do beautiful, beautiful things through you. Just don't put your ego forward: "I can do something. God, I will do this. You will do that." No. It's either all you or all God. Better that way. And I am for all God. That's my ground. Whether it's background or foreground or middle ground. I don't know."



*Work is worship.*



*Gurudev leads chanting during a 1973 retreat in Monticello, New York.*



*On his first visit to the West, in 1966, Sri Gurudev stopped in Europe before coming to the United States. During his stay in Europe, he was invited to speak in Aalst, BELGIUM. On May 6, 1966, at the townhall in Aalst, Sri Gurudev gave the following talk, which imparted the ancient teachings and timeless wisdom of Yoga as he had imbibed them from his beloved Master, Sri Swami Sivananda.*

## THE ULTERIOR AIM OF YOGA: TO FIND THAT PEACE AND JOY IN YOU

**Wherefrom can I get that everlasting peace and joy?**

Beloved brothers and sisters, it gives me immense joy to be in the midst of the yogis and yoginis of Aalst and to share what I have learned so far at the feet of my Master, Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj of the Himalayas.

In this world, not only we human beings, but all that have life seek to be happy. Nobody wants sorrow; all expect a very happy life. In all our attempts, whatever we do, whatever we see, our ulterior aim is to find that happiness. With that idea we get into life, try to grasp a little happiness through our health, through our wealth, through our power, through our position, through our beauty and through so many things. But, ultimately, we come into some sort of sorrow and never know continuous joy. We call ourselves civilized, inventing so many things to make ourselves happy. But, alas, all these scientific inventions end in fear and worry, and no real peace or happiness is found. However, after getting tired of all these things, one turns within to ask the question: Wherefrom can I get that everlasting peace and joy? And it is that question within that brings us to real religion or other systems of living. And it was in response to that question that the sages and saints of yore founded the universal system that they called Yoga.

(As my subject today is primarily on *Raja Yoga* and *Hatha Yoga*, I don't want to deviate very much from those subjects into other areas of the religious life, which I will speak about tomorrow.)

This Yoga is very much misunderstood by the general public, particularly in the West. One thinks that it is something mysterious, miraculous, something superhuman. And it is with such expectations that many people come into the system of Yoga. We come across people who ask various questions. For example: What can you do? Can you do something supernatural? Can you drink a little bit of acid? Can you walk on fire? Can you float over the water? Can you do something that I cannot do? Those are the questions that we are asked very often. But Yoga is not about all these things. Though all these things are possible, they are by-products on the yogic path. You can know

the future, you can read others' minds, you can hear distant sounds, clairaudience, clairvoyance, and so on. But all these are not the aim of Yoga. The ulterior aim of Yoga is to find that peace and joy in you.

**We don't know how to enjoy Nature in its natural form.**

**To fall sick is a sin**

To find out that joy, we have to analyze: what makes us sad? what causes us sorrow? Well, in this life, disease brings sorrow; our mental upsets bring sorrow. These are the two things, mainly—upsets in the mind and upsets in the body. They bring us sorrow. But, in our opinion, to fall sick is a sin. The Creator, if we believe in one, doesn't want His children to be unhappy, to be sickly. He wants them always healthy and always happy. That is why he has given us pure air, pure water, good sunlight, and everything in the name of Nature. However, because we violate many of the natural laws, we fall sick.

We don't know how to enjoy Nature in its natural form. Rather, we believe always in distorting Nature, in making it artificial and then enjoying it. To cite an example (if

there is anyone who falls victim to this example, please excuse me): The Lord created us with nice, fine lungs, and he created for us fine air with plenty of oxygen, which we can inhale fully. We can purify our blood circulation and become healthy. But we don't want that free, pure oxygen and the pure air. We pay plenty of money to buy nicotine gas in its place. Because the pure air is cheap, is free, we don't know the value of it, but we pay money to get the poison, and that's okay for us all. I don't know how people can expect to purify their blood by taking in poison like nicotine instead of taking in oxygen. Yet, they want to be healthy and happy. And this is just one example. In very many ways, we violate the laws of Nature. So, we have to follow Nature as far as possible, making our systems pure and free from all these foreign impurities. At least to those who believe in a personal God, I'd like to ask the question: "Have you ever heard from the church of any God signing a medical certificate and going to the hospital for a few days? That means that the gods are always happy and healthy. They are never ill. And they expect us, their children, also to be always happy.

### **Yoga and the physical body**

So, the system of Yoga, which starts from the very base, from the physical side, wants you to be happy and healthy. Yoga is not a religion. Sometimes, people might think that. Yoga is just a system that can be practiced by everybody, irrespective of caste, creed, race or religion.

The founder of this system called Yoga was Maharshi Patanjali, who is supposed to have lived 5,000 years ago. His aim of Yoga was to control the mind and to live happily. When he analyzed why we become unhappy, he found, basically, that ill-health, physical ailment, is the most important reason. So, he started with the physical body and found certain postures in which you tone your inner system, the veins, and the

nerves to keep the body healthy.

To give an analogy, there are particular cells in our present-day machines and automatic mechanisms in our engines. Even this morning, I saw a factory here in Aals wherein, if anything goes wrong anywhere immediately the whole system is cut off by electronic eyes. Likewise, the Creator has

given us electronic eyes. These eyes are not there to stop the system, but, by the various hormones produced by the different glands in our system, to rectify it immediately. These

hormones immediately set right any ailment in the system. In fact, the present-day medical system has come to this conclusion, and many doctors treat their patients with hormones like adrenaline, penicillin, and so forth. They are all juices produced by the different glands in our system. We know, for example, that if the thyroid gland becomes irreparable, then we lose our health. And it has been discovered that if we replace the thyroid gland with some other healthy gland, then we become healthy. That is why we graft monkeys' thyroid glands onto our systems. However, very often, I used to wonder how the monkey gland brings us all that we want. It might bring us the monkey's vigor and vigor, but who knows? Will it not also bring us the mind of the monkey? If we are not interested in getting into that kind of danger and if there is the possibility of repairing our own glands, why don't we try that? And that is why the Yoga *asanas* mainly tone the different glands.

For example, when you do the shoulder stand, *Sarvangasana*, you are toning up the thyroid gland. When you do the bow posture, *Dhanurasana*, you are toning up the adrenal glands. And you need not get a prick from the doctor in order to receive a drop of adrenaline to digest your sugar. You can digest your own sugar through your own adrenaline. Of course, maybe if the glands are completely damaged, we may not be able to repair them fully. But slight derangements can be easily

## **Yoga is not a religion.**



et right by this practice. In fact, during our several years of practice and experience, we have come across many people who have cleared up their ailments, some of them considered to be incurable. I say "incurable" because that is the term that doctors use. Doctors say that these ailments can't be cured because there is no medicine for them. Still, the Yoga practices have cured people with these illnesses. In fact, with the proper dietetic restrictions and with the proper Yoga practices—*asanas* and breathing—one can cure almost all types of diseases.

What's more, Yoga is not only curative, but it is also preventive. So, even though we may not have a disease, we need not say, "I don't have any disease; why should I practice Yoga?" By practicing Yoga, we become immune against all kinds of diseases. Through other exercises, we may become strong, physically strong in the muscles, but, still, we may not be immune to the disease-producing factor. A strong person, very muscular, can get wet in the rain for a few minutes and then catch cold and fall ill. But the person who practices Yoga need not worry about the sun or the rain. Neither will that person catch a cold, nor will the cold catch him or her.

To continue along these lines, we call a particular kind of fever *influenza*. And I always ask: "Why are you under the *influence* of that fever?" And we answer: "Because that type of fever is *influenza*." The very name of the fever is *influenza*; that means that it *influences* you. Because you get influenced, it influences you. Because you get influenced, you get the attack. For it is not the fault of the fever; it is the fault of the person who gets influenced. If we can resist that, it cannot influence us, and we can do that by these practices. For instance, in breathing we charge every cell of our body with plenty of oxygen. Oxygen means life. And we get life all over the body, a fully oxygenated body—in other

words, with *prana*; that is the yogic term for it. And, not only can you, yourself, enjoy good health, but you can also send the *prana* to others. You can lend it. That is how *pranic* healing is done.

### **The mind falls ill because of impure thoughts**

Yes, there is no limit to these practices that you have already seen here. From the little child to the very old person, all can practice. In this way, we keep the body healthy. Our ultimate aim is to do something with the mind. But, as I told you before, we start with the body, because if the body is not healthy, it becomes a great nuisance to us. A healthy body will not trouble you, and you will be free to do something with the mind. You may not even think of the body. Again, I will give an example.

All of us here have a little toe on our right leg. Is there anyone here who has thought of that toe within the past ten days? Is there anyone? No? If anyone says, "Yes, Swamiji, I have thought of the little toe," then I would really have to say that there is a shoe-bite in that toe, because the toe must not be healthy. This is the proof: if the toe is healthy, you forget it; it will not be a hindrance to you. But if the toe is unhealthy, if there is even the slightest trouble, it will not allow you to think of anything else. Every minute, you will think of it, and you will want to do something about it. So, when

such is the case with the little toe, if the entire body or an important bodily mechanism goes out of order, can we think of anything else, let alone meditation? In the study, the

student won't be able to learn well; the businessperson won't be able to do his or her business; the doctor won't be able to think of the injections very well. We can rest assured that a healthy body is desirable, and that can be easily achieved through the yogic postures and breathing practices.

To do these practices, you don't need

**Yoga is not only curative, but it is also preventive.**

many people by your side or many instruments in order to do the exercises. All you need is a spread mat. You don't need a large area, a big playground. So it's very easy, very cheap, and anybody can practice.

From here, I will go a little further, and, within a few words, I'll come to the aim of Yoga and then turn to the practical side.

After we finish focusing on the body, we go over to the mind, and we say that even if the mind is sick, we can make it healthy through certain practices. The mind also falls ill, because of its impure thoughts. Holy and good thoughts are always good food for the mind. Bad thoughts are always bad food for the mind. So we must take care of the thinking. Because the human being is a thinking animal. If the thinking is all right, the individual is all right. And so, we must think about: *why* we think and *how* we think and *what* we think.

Well, you all know what we think. Very often, we think of food, of our money, our name, our wealth, and so on. I don't want to say that you should not think of these things. You have every right to enjoy the material benefits of this world. But, with very good control over your own mind, you can enjoy these things well. Adjust, lead a moderate life, control your senses. The eyes want so many things; the ears want so many things; and the tongue wants so many things. We always limit them. Don't give yourself all that the eyes want. Don't try to hear all that the ears want. For example, two people might be talking inside a room, and you may want to listen through the door. Just don't do that. That will bring you trouble. We must control our senses. By controlling the senses, we control the mind. Once the mind is controlled and made pure, it will be your very good servant and the best instrument. It is much more powerful than the atomic bomb. It is an atomic energy with

**We must control our senses. By controlling the senses, we control the mind.**

which you can do anything in this world because a pure and controlled mind gets not the atomic energy, but the *Atmic* energy, that is, the inner, Divine power. That is what some scriptures say: "If your own mind is your friend, then you have friends all over the world. If your own mind is your enemy, then you have enemies all over the world."

Therefore, there are certain practices in the yogic field wherein you control the senses. If you purify the thoughts, you focus your thoughts, and you make the mind strong and pure. And that is what we call concentration and meditation. Once you are able to do that, you will feel the real Bliss within you.

During tomorrow's talk, I will talk about some of the other aspects of Yoga. And, at that time, I will be able to explain the high side of *Raja Yoga*. This evening is specially devoted for me to demonstrate some *Yoga asanas* for you to see. As I do the poses, I will try to explain something about all the benefits of those poses.

### **Hatha Yoga asanas**

I always begin the postures with *Vajrasana*, the Diamond Pose. And, then I repeat OM three times. Do you want to know what OM is? Close your ears with your fingers and listen carefully. What you hear is the pulsation of life, the vibration of the life force. That is OM. Creation is movement, movement is creation. At the base of each movement, there lies a sound vibration. That is why the Bible says: "In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was God." OM is that subtle

basic sound that one hears in deep meditation. The sages of yore who heard this sound wanted to communicate it to their contemporaries. Therefore, they had to transcribe this subtle sound into an articulated syllable. The Jewish prophets called it *Ameen*, the Christians called it *Amen*, the Buddhists and Hindus called it *OM*.



Now, sit erect and relaxed for the chanting of OM in *Vajrasana*. The three parts of the body—head, neck and trunk—in one straight line. Then, draw the attention inwards. Breathe slowly and deeply. Open the mouth in the form of an *O* and sing a long *O*. Feel the vibrations produced thereby. These vibrations begin at the navel and are to be felt all over the trunk, just to the base of the throat. With half of the breath consumed, close the lips and sing a long *M* with the rest of the breath. You can feel the vibrations,

starting from the throat and spreading over the head and about the whole head. This brings the nervous system into a special, favorable condition and calms the body and the mind.

Among the *asanas*, there are many groups. The sitting postures, the standing postures and the lying-down postures, some abdominal exercises and some topsy-turvy poses. And, at the end, the relaxing pose. Then comes the breathing.

Some people might find their body very stiff before they start the Yoga *asanas*. Such people should always start with a few *Surya Namaskars* and then go to the *asanas*. I have seen many doing that in the class here. Still, I'd like to show you, once, *Surya Namaskar*. There may be a slight difference from what you're doing, because there are several ways of doing it. It depends upon one's taste. There are several poses in *Surya Namaskar*. You start one by one. To those who want to add a little strain to this exercise, that is, also combining some physical exercises, which can vary a little in between movements, I'll show you these, too. There is a combination of breathing as well. In all the forward bendings, you exhale; in all the backward bendings, you inhale; in certain cases, you hold the breath in. So, with *Surya Namaskar* the body warms up a little and loses its stiffness. Then, you can do the other poses.

There is a sequence to the poses. While lying on the abdomen, we do some backward-bending poses. Three poses: the Co-

bra, the Locust, and the Bow, in one set. Then, lying on the back, you do the forward-bending poses: one to touch the toes, *Paschimottanasana*, and another called *Halasana*, or the plough pose. Then, there is the forward bowing of the neck, *Sarvangasana*, and the backward bowing, *Matsyasana*, or the fish pose. There are variations, which you can do in class, but these are not so important. The main thing that you have to focus on is that you retain the position for at least a few seconds,

## Breathe slowly and deeply.

gradually increasing the time that you hold the pose. For each pose puts mild pressure on a particular part of the body, so you have to retain the pressure for a while. The attention is concentrated on that particular part. That is why these poses are called *asanas* and not exercises. *Asana* means *posture*.

Another abdominal pose is the Peacock pose, or *Mayurasana*. This pose increases the pressure in the abdomen; as the pressure is increased, heat is generated inside, which strengthens the abdominal viscera, burns off all the impurities, and dislocates clogged foreign matter. The scriptures say that you can digest anything and everything by practicing the Peacock pose.

Then, there are some standing postures. Very common is the triangular pose, *Trikonasana*. Another standing pose is *Padahasthasana*. There are so many *asanas* described in the original scripture, the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*. But we selected just a few that can give you overall development. In my experience, I have found that one more backward pose, one that can be done by all, is beneficial. We call that pose *Ardha Chandra asana*, or the crescent pose. Just lock the thumbs together, hold the breath in a little, stretch the arms overhead, and bend backwards. This *asana* exercises the abdominal muscles. After this comes the headstand, *Sirshasana*. When you finish *Sirshasana*, you shouldn't get up right away; just sit in *Vajrasana*, or you can lie down until the

blood comes down to its normal position. These postures are more than enough for a person to keep him- or herself fit. But if one is interested, one can learn many more.

Also, there are certain difficult poses. I'll show you one or two. Sit in *Padmasana*, the Lotus pose. Slowly, bring the arms between the legs. This is the lock pose. I, myself, don't do this pose every day, just for occasions like this. Many of the yogis who are here might think: "What

is this? He has done only what we know?" So that they are not disappointed, I'll try to do a few that I have left long ago. This is *Omkarasana*, the *asana* of the word OM. Now I shall try to show *Yoganidra* (sleeping posture), which the president here wanted to see. He wanted to know whether I can still do this, so now he'll see. This is the first pillow (Gurudev placed one leg behind his neck), and this is the second pillow (Gurudev placed the other leg around his neck); now I can sleep. And if I don't get sleep, I can balance, so it's nice.

The spine can bend any way you want and how you want it to. But the ulterior aim of Yoga is to keep a very supple spine. In English there is a proverb: "If you have a backbone, bring it forward." This means: if you really have courage, show it. That is the idea. But the courage lies in the spine. The leg is only an extremity. After the hip, all the important parts of the body are the head, the lungs, the heart. Every one of them stands on the single pillar: the spine. It is a single pillar of several bones, which you call vertebrae. And all the different nerves come out from the vertebrae. So, if you keep the spine supple, you will always be healthy. Moreover, you can always be young. Nobody need become old. If you start Yoga practice today, after one year, you will see that you are younger than five years ago. I have seen many students enjoying that. So many of the senses that hadn't

been functioning properly become energetic again and function very well.

After the *asanas*, you always do *Yoga Mudra*, coming to the source. You sit in the Lotus pose, hold your hands behind your back, and bend forward. You can feel the pressure of the heels going into the abdomen, feeling that you are trying to bring the che-

**...you can always be young.  
Nobody need become old.**

down. Of course, the beginning, many people will be able to come down just a little, then a little more, then the nose

will come to the floor, then the chin and ultimately, the chest. Little by little.

After *Yoga Mudra*, you do *Savasana*. *Savasana* seems to be very simple, but, actually, it is a very difficult posture. However much you relax, the limbs remain stiff. So you must consciously relax, limb by limb, part by part. Now, my way of doing this is you tense the right leg, tense it, then raise the leg up a little, keeping it well tensed, then suddenly, relax it. Then, the left leg and then, the arms. Then, shake the limbs well. Now, the limbs are lifeless. After that, relax the hip muscles. Then, inhale and fully blow up the abdomen and exhale. . . haa! Now inhale and fill up the chest. . . haa! Tense and relax the shoulders, the neck, and the face muscles. Now, you are fully relaxed. If you could relax all the muscles like this, in a few minutes, you would regain all the energy that you have lost in your work and you would be fit to do several more hours of work. If you have patience.

In fact, I might start giving you all this information again and even start doing all the poses once more, because I feel fresh, though I had just come and sat in front of you. That is the real yogic relaxation. You need not buy your sleep. What I mean is that you need not buy your sleep in the form of sleeping pills. You can sleep very well. For example, in Hong Kong, a cinema director who had lost his sleeping faculty completely came to me complaining that he had had no sleep





*Sri Gurudev leading deep relaxation during a Hatha Yoga class at Princeton University.*

five or six years and that his entire body was rigid. I made him practice this relaxing posture. Little by little, he relaxed. There he was, asleep, relaxing, sleeping for six hours.

Also, in Japan, during the International Rotary Club conference, one Rotarian challenged me: "If you can relax me, if you can remove the stiffness from my body, I will believe in Yoga." I had only one request for him: "I am not here to challenge anybody. I will request you only to come here, lie down, and follow my instructions. Just relax yourself, bit by bit; don't be stiff. If you relax yourself consciously, then you will know whether you are relaxing or not." He did it, and he was sleeping there while we all had our lunch. Finally, he got up, saying: "I am your first disciple in Yoga. I will do everything you say. And I will propagate Yoga from here on." He saw the benefits.

There are so many patients like that. However, some people might think that this process is some sort of hypnotism, as someone asked me a few days ago. It is nothing like that. You must sleep consciously. You have that power. It comes easily.

A yogi concentrates on anything he or she does. If a yogi eats, he or she concentrates on that and digests fully. So, if you give food to the yogi, it is not wasted, because the yogi digests everything, whereas most people eat too much but digest very little, using only part of what they eat, with the rest just pass-

ing through. And that is why food prices are so high all over the world. Also, no matter how much people eat, they are not strong, because it is not how much we eat that is the question, but how much we assimilate. A person may have plenty of money, but if he doesn't enjoy that money, then he is not a wealthy man. In the same way, when you go to sleep, you must also concentrate. When you are ready to go to sleep, if you relax the entire body, then you will certainly get sleep.

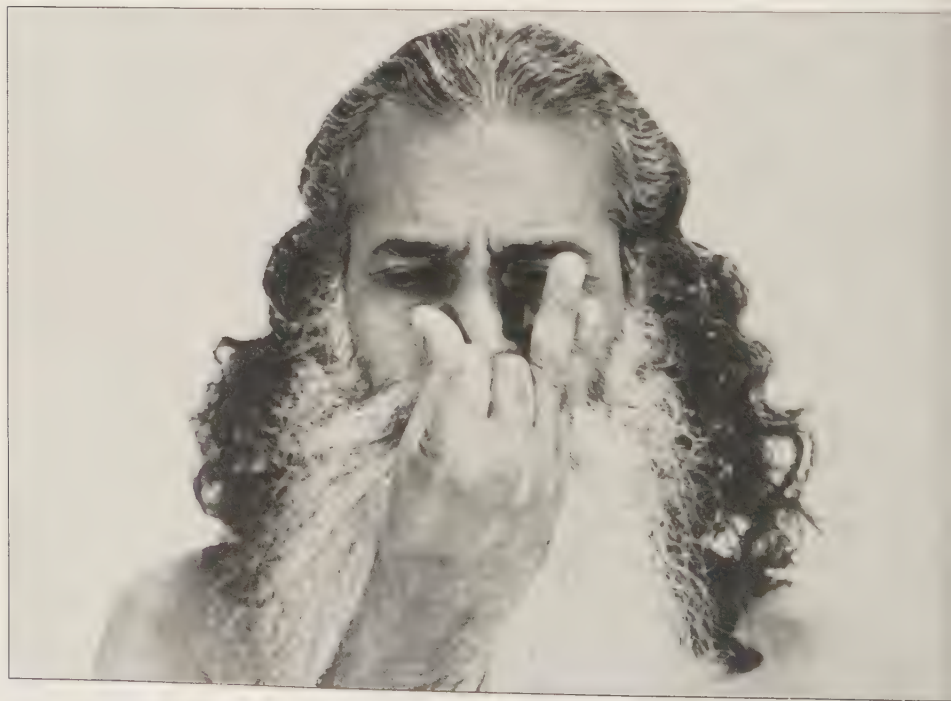
Some of the doctors who are here will agree with me that the disease called constipation is completely psychological. That is, if, by any chance, one day you don't move your bowels, you feel that you are constipated and that starts the constipation, itself. When you sit on your toilet; you don't concentrate. You don't command the large intestines to do their job. Sit and think of the large intestines, command them to work, feel that the bowels are moved and that the foreign matter is thrown out. You just concentrate on it. But, here, many of us don't do that. As we enter the toilet, we bring all the magazines and newspapers with us and, perhaps, a number of cigarettes. And, as we become interested in an article, we forget why we are there. Then, we come out and nothing happened! We need deep concentration and should do one thing at a time. Work while you work, eat when you eat, sleep while you sleep, and drink when you drink.

## Pranayama: the breathing practices

So, these are the Yoga postures and the relaxation. After these, you do a little bit of breathing. Therefore, now, I'll go to the breathing. I'll begin with two questions: Why do we breathe? Do we draw the air in consciously when we breathe? The answer to the latter question is *no*; we don't forcefully draw in the air. Rather, the air is drawn in by the inner system, by our inner muscles, because the system wants the oxygen in the air. The blood accumulates carbon and the burned-out materials. In order to draw the carbon out, it wants oxygen. We accumulate the burned-out particles in the blood because of our bodily movements. You all know that movement causes friction and that friction causes heat and, also, that the heat, in its turn, burns up certain matter. For example, if I lift my hand like this, I have a sort of movement at my elbow. That movement causes friction there, a sort of rubbing. Also, there is a mild heat produced at this junction, and the heat burns up certain tis-

sues. The burned out tissues become carbon and they are collected by the blood. The blood that collected the carbon goes to the heart and from there to the lungs, leaving the carbon there and coming back purified. Thus, the more the movements in the body, the more carbon produced and the more breath required to purify the carbon. And that is why we breathe in.

Of course, if we don't move the body very much, then the breathing requirement is also very little. If there is no movement at all, I mean not only physical movement, but also mental movement, no breathing at all is necessary. The mind, also, is matter, and when that moves, it also produces some heat and some waste matter. That is why a person, a yogi, who can completely still his mind, his physical and mental movement doesn't need to breathe at all. That individual's maxim is: *Waste not and want not*. For what you do not waste, you do not want. What we waste, we want; what we don't waste, we don't want. Yogis don't waste any energy.



*Sri Gurudev demonstrates Nadi-Sudhi, alternate nostril breathing.*



and don't bother about food either. They can live without food. That is why you see that they eat very little. A little bit of food is enough for their work, because they don't waste very much of their energy. And, all the nourishment that they want they can get directly from the air. By proper breathing, you get such a lot of nourishment, such a lot of vitality into your system. In fact, it has been measured by instruments that in our normal breathing, we use only 500 cc. of air; that is, in normal breathing, you exhale 500 cc. and you inhale the same amount. But if you want to breathe in a little more, you can do that. You can try it. Everybody inhale a little and then inhale a little more air. This additional air we never take in during normal breathing, and this air that you are taking in by a forceful inhalation is measured at 1.600 cc.

In the same way, after the normal expulsion or expiration, you can forcefully expel a little more air. That is, again, 1.600 cc. So now, imagine that we forcefully send the air out and start again. (This is a mathematical calculation, and you should clearly remember it and calculate it.) So, after the deep exhalation, you inhale the 1.600 cc, which, first, you throw out forcefully. Then, you take in the 500 cc, which you take in normally. And, then, you take in another 1.600 cc, which you take in forcefully. Now, total it up. How much?  $1.600 + 500 + 1.600 = 3.700$ ; 3.700 cc. of air taken in. So, what is the difference between the 500 and 3.700? It is more than seven times more than you ordinarily take in. That means seven times more energy, *prana*, oxygen, everything!

When I say *prana*, it is not that you take only the oxygen and the hydrogen of the air, but there is also a certain force behind the atmosphere that you take in. That force we call the vital energy or the *pranic* energy. The normal air goes up only to the lungs, but the vital energy, the *prana*, goes all over the body with every breath of yours. So, now, you can imagine both the regular breathing

and the yogic breathing, and you can see just how much benefit you get from the yogic breathing. Keeping this in mind, you can learn different types of breathing.

Always, the beginner learns *Nadi Suddhi*, or the *nadi*-purifying breathing. Slow inhalations and slow exhalations for some time. It's a sort of throat-control, producing a little hissing sound within the throat. You inhale slowly, as much as possible, and exhale as much as possible.

After some time, you try the alternate breathing. This is called *Vishnu Mudra*. You just close the fingers of the right hand, leaving the thumb and last two fingers open. Bring the arm toward your face. Use the thumb to close the right nostril and exhale slowly with the hissing sound. Now, you inhale. You leave the right nostril and you exhale slowly through the right nostril and, then, inhale slowly through the same nostril, and so on.

After a while, you can include a mental count. That is, if you inhale for six counts, you can mentally count: OM 1, OM 2, OM 3, and so on, like that, so that each count is exactly one second; and you do that mentally. And, suppose after you inhale for six counts like that, you try to exhale for twelve counts. You try, that's all. It is not a necessity in the beginning. Even if you exhale eight counts, it's all right. But, gradually, you can double it. That means that the time is double; the quantity is the same. You inhale in a particular time; you exhale and double that time. By that practice, you get good control over the inward muscles; that controls the lungs. After practicing well for three or four months, where you can do this inhaling and exhaling alone for at least five to ten minutes, without any strain, you can try to do a little holding of the breath. This is known as *Sukha Purvaka Pranayama*.

Every time you inhale through one nostril, hold, exhale through the other nostril. Then, inhale through the same nostril through which you exhaled, hold it, then exhale through the other nostril. You can see how,

in different sections, the air comes in and how it goes out. But, as it goes in, the stomach is blocked a little in the first half, then in the second half; the chest expands, while the stomach goes in. And when you exhale, the chest contracts; then, after that, the stomach contracts fully to throw out the air. That is, one inhalation through the left nostril, hold in, and exhale through the right nostril. This is the normal *Sukha Purvaka Pranayama*. But there are other varieties of *Pranayama*, as well.

Particularly for cold climates, there is a warmth-giving breathing exercise, which is called *Bhastrika*. *Bhastrika* is very good for getting rid of phlegm and for curing troubles connected with the lungs and bronchial tubes. It is a very good remedy for removing catarrh and for asthmatic problems.

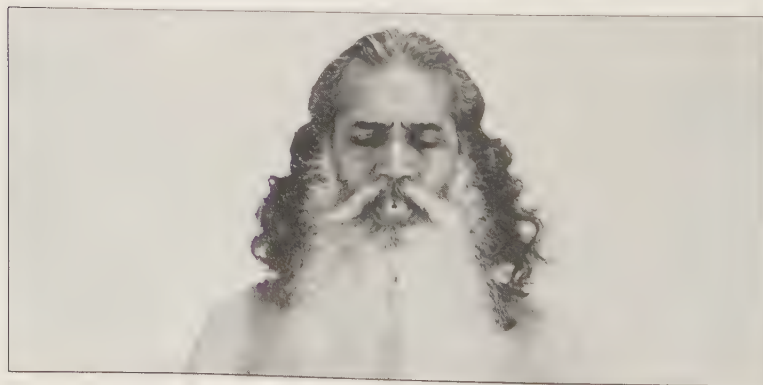
The first half of *Bhastrika* we call *Kapalabhati*, when there is no retention. But the same *Kapalabhati* with retention added is called *Bhastrika*. We do that by sudden expulsions. Sit straight, firmly in your seat. Though you were retaining for long, don't allow the air to rush out. If after the retention, you allow the air to rush out, then there is no purpose to the practice. When you have no control over your expiration, that means that you have withheld the air more than your capacity. So, you should always decide on your retention capacity in terms of the capacity of the expulsion. Without any strain whatsoever, you should be able to exhale the air. There are certain people who vigorously use all sorts of force to draw the air in; then,

they hold the air in with force and, then, they exhale with force and they say to smile always—smile the air in, retain with a smile, then smile the air out. That is *Kapalabhati* and *Bhastrika*.

Now, suppose you get warm days and the warmth becomes too much. Of course, it's not so warm here, but suppose you come to India. You'll feel the heat there, and it may be unbearable. We don't have much air conditioning there. So, you can have your own "refrigeration friend" with you; that is, I'll show you "refrigeration breathing."

Just extend your tongue a little, roll it into a tube, and inhale the air through the tube. How chilling and cool it is! Try it. How nice and chilly, as if you were directly taking a cool drink. This practice has a cooling effect. You inhale the breath through the rolled tongue, keep it in for a while, and then breathe out through the nose. This is known as *Sitali Pranayama*, a refrigerating *Pranayama*. Thus, in a warm climate, you can practice *Sitali*, and in cold weather, you can do *Bhastrika*, so that you yourself, find the balance between heat and cold. And when the physical balance of heat and cold is experienced, you can also find the mental balance, because for the mind, heat and cold represent either pleasure or pain. You can learn to balance them also. These are the simple but very beneficial breathing practices.

In the meantime, let me thank you for having given me this golden opportunity to serve you all.



*Sri Gurudev  
demonstrates  
Sitali,  
the Cooling  
Breath.*





*Sri Gurudev poses with Gerard Blitz and members of the European Union of National Yoga Federations at their annual seminar in Zinal, Switzerland.*

Sri Gurudev's European students begged him to return to Europe, sponsoring him to return for a lecture tour in 1967, where he spoke at the First International Yoga Convention in Brussels and to many different organizations in towns throughout Belgium and France. The people of Aalst had found that his teachings had so transformed their lives that they received him at a civic reception, where their mayor presented him with the town plaque.

Gurudev returned on his world tours in 1968 and 1970. Each time he returned, he received more invitations to speak. The Second International Yoga Convention in Brussels invited him back as one of their principle speakers, and he spoke at Yoga centers and universities in France, Belgium, Switzerland, England, Denmark, Sweden, and Italy, where the City of Verona and the Academy of Tiberina in Rome both awarded him their respective

medals of honor. On his third trip to London in 1972, the British Wheel of Yoga made him honorary president of their organization.

Sri Gurudev continues to share his wisdom and the teachings of Yoga with European students. For example, this past winter, on his way back from a four-month sojourn in India, Sri Gurudev was invited to speak in Gibraltar, where several hundred people gathered to hear him.

Moreover, today, there are a several Integral Yoga Institutes and numerous Integral Yoga Centers all over Europe and the United States, with, literally, hundreds of highly trained teachers instructing students in all aspects of Integral Yoga. And, each year, more and more men and women come to Yogaville to take Teacher Training, making the time-honored teachings available to countless individuals who are interested in leading healthy, happy, peaceful lives.

*The first Integral Yoga Institute in America was located at 500 West End Avenue in New York City. Our late beloved brother, Vishnu Jayson, became its director in 1975. An interfaith minister ordained by Rabbi Joseph Gelberman, Vishnu inspired us through his exemplary life of selfless service, his commitment to and his dissemination of Sri Gurudev's teachings, and his humility, compassion and generosity. It is fitting to include in this commemorative issue Vishnu's loving tribute to Sri Gurudev, presented at the Ashram during the auspicious occasion of Guru Poornima, 9 July 1994.*

### **HE CHOOSES EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO TEACH US SOMETHING**

I first saw Gurudev at one of the early, maybe even the first, legendary "Swami and the Rabbi" lectures in New York City, probably in 1967. Actually, I learned about this program before I even had a clue about

Yoga from a tiny ad in the Village Voice which, at that time, was a newspaper for hippies. The ad said: "A Dialogue on Yoga and Hassidism: The Swami and the Rabbi." I thought, "Well, with a rabbi, how terrible can this be?" I went to the lecture, and there they were, the swami and the rabbi, Sri Swami Satchidananda and Rabbi Joseph Gelberman. And maybe the most amazing sight to me was Gurudev sitting there, with his long hair, on the floor, chanting "Har OM, Hari OM." I just fell in love with the swami and with the rabbi, too. And, perhaps at that point, I couldn't really understand well what was being said, but I could certainly feel what was there. To this day, I can remember hearing the rabbi say, "You know every year, I become more and more sure that in the last lifetime, he was the rabbi and I was the swami. Since it was a rabbi, a Jewish man saying this, I thought that it must surely be all right.

So, of course, I jumped in, right into the



*Rabbi Gelberman and Sri Gurudev share the bill at "The Swami and the Rabbi" program at New York's Cathedral of St. John the Divine in 1980.*





*Sri Gurudev and Vishnu Jayson enter 500 West End Avenue  
on their way to a LOTUS fund-raising dinner at the uptown IYI, June 1981.*

Hatha Yoga classes that were being held at 500 West End Avenue and also over to the Universalist Church on Friday evenings, and, slowly, I really began to hear. Still, for some time, I hadn't had direct contact with Gurudev, until, one day, when there was also a children's class to be held at the Institute on Saturday, and I thought, "Well, I'll take my son" (who is now a thirty-one-year-old musician). So, my long-haired five-year-old son and I went to the Institute. We were standing in front of the elevator when the door opened and out came Gurudev. Suddenly, my little boy, who had never seen Gurudev and had no idea as to what sort of program his daddy was taking him to, saw Gurudev and bowed down. And, Gurudev bowed down even lower. It was such a precious moment, really precious.

Then, gradually, through taking classes and meeting people, I began to get some sense of the purity and the dedication of the people who were around Gurudev. So beautiful. So exquisite. I can remember when the new Thirteenth Street New York Integral Institute opened the first natural foods store. The purity and cleanliness of the people who

served there just touched me every time I went in.

Meanwhile, the years went by and the words became a little bit clearer and the Connecticut Ashram came with all its beauty. Until, one day, I found myself attending the celebration of Gurudev's tenth anniversary in the United States. Standing on the floor of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and listening to Gurudev speak, I suddenly felt tears coming down my face with the recognition that this was the way it was in books. I'd never dreamed that something like this would happen to me.

Another year went by, and, one evening, Gurudev was giving a lecture in a church on West End Avenue. It was very crowded inside, filled with people. Gurudev was up in front giving the lecture and people were continuing to enter. It was an old church, and it had a very old door that kept banging. I was standing in the back, and I thought, "Well, I'll stand here by the door so that it won't make so much noise when it bangs." After a little while, a man came in, and I don't know how or why, but, somehow, I just knew, "There's something strange about

this man. Something is not right about him.” And the man began to walk down the center aisle, and, suddenly, he broke into a run and began screaming. To this day, I don’t know what he said, but it sounded like, “Satchidananda, something, something!!!!” And he ran. I saw him running and ran after him, like in a football game. Wham! Down we went, with me on top of him in the middle of the church aisle, with two or three of our people landing on me from behind. All the air went out of me, and I just lay there. I understand that the other guys took him outside and that Gurudev saw all this happening and simply went on speaking as though nothing had happened. I heard later that he said, “Huh; one swift kick from me, and he’d have gone flying out the window!” But, the next day he came to my space in the men’s dorm of the downtown Institute, and do you know what he said? He said, “Oh, it’s so nice to have a bodyguard.”

Well, the years passed, and I continued to show up whenever Gurudev came to New York, and I would also go regularly to the Connecticut ashram. Curiously, for some strange reason, during every one of Gurudev’s lectures, it was almost impossible for me to stay awake. No matter how I tried to stay awake, at some point during the lecture, my eyes would close, and I would miss what was happening. And this was very upsetting. I would think, “What’s the matter with me that I can’t stay awake?” And I would struggle to stay awake. Well, during one of those lectures at the ashram, I was sitting not very far from where Gurudev was speaking, struggling in that way to stay awake. Suddenly, I looked up, and Gurudev’s eyes seemed to catch mine, and a blast of energy, like fire, came to me, and it cured me. I never had any problem staying awake.

Then, the day came when it became appropriate for the organization to let go of the original IYI on West End Avenue. I was employed in the advertising business at the time, and it was a time in my life when it felt

that a change was necessary. So, I asked Gurudev if it might be possible for me to manage the West End Avenue IYI. He said “Fine,” and then, amazingly, he gave me only one instruction. “Set up a separate corporation,” he said. At the time, I didn’t know what the reason for that was but that I’d certainly do it. But I came to see how, as a teacher, Gurudev is extraordinarily non-directive, that is, he lets us make our own mistakes so that we can learn directly from them—provided that the mistake that we wish to make doesn’t damage another.

For example, there came a day when my son, who was, by this time, a teenager, became one of those then famous New York graffiti artists, one of those kids who painted extraordinary paintings on the sides of subway cars. In fact, there wasn’t a day when you could go into the New York subway without seeing a spray-painted subway car, painted illegally in the middle of the night. Somehow, my son got arrested and was put into jail. He was there one night, and they were going to keep him for a second night because the fingerprint machine was broken, which made it impossible to have an arraignment. As it happened, on this day, Gurudev had come to New York to give a public lecture. Fortunately, one of the devotees attending the lecture was a lawyer. We began to talk about my son’s predicament, and Nick, the lawyer, said, “Well, I know a judge, so it will be very easy to get your son out. He won’t have to spend another night in the lockup; we can just get an order to get him out.” Immediately, I thought, “Oh, good, let’s do that!” At that point, Gurudev came in, and the lecture began.

When the lecture ended, Gurudev came by, the way he usually does, choosing to stop in front of someone to speak with him or her. It always seemed miraculous to me the way Gurudev would choose a particular person—and it was never me. But, this time he stopped right in front of me, looked at me, and said, “Ah, Vishnu. How are your chil-





*Sri Gurudev opens the memorable Woodstock Music Festival, 1969.*

dren?" So I told him about my son being in jail, and he said to me softly, "I wouldn't do that if I were you. I would let him stay there another night. It's such a mistake to over-protect children, to not let them experience the consequences of their mistakes. Let him stay in jail. Nothing bad will happen to him. In fact, he'll learn something from that experience; let him learn it." So, of course, that's what I did.

The next morning, the lawyer and I went to the courthouse where my son was to be arraigned. He was sentenced to twenty or thirty days of cleaning Central Park. The first words that came out of his mouth were: "Well, I'll never do that again! If I want to draw graffiti, I'll get a piece of paper. I don't need the subway car." For me, it was a special experience.

A few more years went by, and Satchidananda Ashram-Yogaville came into being in Buckingham, Virginia. And, then, LOTUS. And on a beautiful, sunny day, we found ourselves at the LOTUS groundbreaking ceremony. As I remember it, there was a grandstand where most of us sat while Gurudev and a few people placed crystals, precious and semi-precious stones, moon rocks, other precious objects and holy water from the world's holy rivers into a big metal box that which was placed in a big hole over which the LOTUS foundation would be constructed. I sat on the sidelines, but someone said that as Board Chairman of the New York IYI, I should be included as one of those who would have the honor of placing the precious objects into the box. My wife, Marilyn, was sitting next to me, and, of course, I felt very proud—I was an "executive." Well, I joined the line of people walking up to the big hole in the ground, and when it was my turn, I looked into the box filled with all the objects and picked out the largest of all the rocks. And, I threw it into the box, looking around to make sure that everyone had seen. Suddenly, I hear a voice, "Hmmm!!! There's too much getting going on here!" I

realized at that moment that Gurudev takes every opportunity, every moment of his life, to teach us something. I mean, here we were witnessing the culmination of Gurudev's extraordinary life-work, the building of LOTUS, yet his mind was open, letting us learn something, no matter what the occasion. It just touched me so.

This reminds me also of a particular Guru Poornima day. At some point, it came to be that if you had grey hair, that is, if you had been around Gurudev for many years, you got picked to do something special during Guru Poornima. For example, you might get to garland Gurudev while he was up on the stage. Well, this grey-haired person and his wife had been chosen a few times to perform some special function together. However, this year, somehow, only I was chosen. There we all were, up on stage. I had this big garland, and, feeling very proud, I ceremoniously put the garland on Gurudev. He just looked at me and said, "But, Vishnu, where's Marilyn?!"

Some more years went by, and, perhaps then, I really began to understand just what the greatest tribute to Gurudev would be. That tribute would be for me to look more closely at the devotees and at who they were now. I could remember how hard it was in the early years for us to do anything right. We didn't serve dinner on time. We stepped on each others' feet. And, yet, it had become obvious in recent years that the teachings Gurudev had been giving us had begun to take, that when people got up to speak, they spoke with dignity and with gravity and with wisdom. It was truly a transformation to see.

Finally, it seems as though Gurudev's messy children have grown up, at least somewhat. And what a trip it has been. And what a trip it still is. By his grace. By his grace. So, thank you, Gurudev. Thank you for all of us. —Vishnu Jayson

*Vishnu's ashes lie in Yogaville's Memorial Grove.*



## MY DIVINE PAPA

In 1966, I was a young dancer living in New York. During that summer, I received an invitation to meet a Swami, whom the artist, Peter Max, had brought to New York. I had no idea that this simple invitation would change the course of my life forever.

After two years of attending *satsangs* and Hatha Yoga classes taught, initially, by Gurudev, himself, I gradually became more involved with the Integral Yoga Institute. And, in 1968, I became Gurudev's secretary and moved into the Institute. On the very first day, Gurudev called me into his office and told me, "I'm going to be very hard on you. If you think that you won't be able to take it, leave now." I, of course, assured Gurudev that that was what I was there for (having heard all about "egodectomies" at his talks). Suffice it to say that after a year of his rubbing and scrubbing my ego—while I typed letters, washed robes, and cooked meals—he had worked MUCH harder than I had, and I felt like a new and better person.

So, I went out into the world to continue with the next phase of my life: marriage and motherhood. But all during these past thirty years, I have stayed as close to Gurudev as to my own heart. And he has been there for me during every single life crisis, from the

death of our one-day-old daughter to the birth of our two sons. Whether I was experiencing joy or sorrow, Gurudev has always given me perfect advice, although, admittedly, it might not have always been the advice that I wanted to hear. With complete faith in his wisdom, I have always found his guidance to be correct, particularly as it concerned family issues.

Moreover, through the years, Gurudev has shown me what unconditional love really is and how profoundly it heals. Also, our sons, who are now in their twenties, have known intuitively since infancy to trust "Papa," and I am often very moved when I learn that one or the other of them, on his own, has called Gurudev to ask for guidance.

I thank God every day for leading me to this Divine Being, and I thank Gurudev every day for accepting me as one of his children. My husband, Parandhaman, and I live at Yogaville, where, once again, I am cooking Gurudev's meals, and our life has been blessed because of Gurudev's presence in it. I have also seen how many others have been helped by him. In fact, the more I practice my *sadhana*, the more profoundly in awe I am of Gurudev. I thought that he was "far out" in 1966. Now, in 1996, I know that he is truly the embodiment of God. OM Shanthi. —*Parameshwari Dinsmoor*

### Question : *If you had a wish, what would it be?*

**Sri Gurudev:** *My only wish is to be a good instrument in the hands of that Supreme Entity that you call God. All these years He has kept me under His feet, used me as an instrument, and has taken care of me so that I wouldn't get involved in any ego problems. And I wish that He would continue to do that. That's my only wish. Other than that, there's nothing else. I may say, "I wish you all health and happiness," but that's in your hands. If a wish comes like that, even that is His wish being expressed through this instrument. So, "Let Thy Will be done."*

*In August of 1971, during a Friday night discussion at Unity Center in New York City, Gurudev articulated his dream of a Yoga community. It was also during this talk that Gurudev expressed, possibly for the first time, his vision of LOTUS.*

## CARING AND SHARING

If we only knew how to care for others and to share what we have, there would be no poverty. Just think of your country here; imagine in one given day how many tons of food is wasted, cooked and uncooked. Today, here in America, I have seen that even if there are only two people in a home, they make food enough for ten. And, then, they just throw it away. In every restaurant, how much food is wasted every day, let alone in the homes. And, in the name of market value, how much food is thrown out just to control prices. Sometimes, we even dump food into the sea because there is too much and they don't want to sell it cheaply. Why not give it to others? It's not that every country should produce everything. For example, if one country produces rice and another produces *dal*, why not exchange, so that both will have rice and *dal* instead of each having either one or the other? In the old days, they never had money. They just had products, and they exchanged them. In that type of system, we feel that we are all individuals in the same family, that the whole world is one family. If we would think that way, why should there be poverty, starvation. Why should there be fights and wars? We may not be able to do that right away all over the world, but we can just set an example in one small place, in one small village. We can live like that.

This reminds me to say something about our project, Yogaville. But please don't think that this is a commercial "plug." Business-minded people might immediately think, "Ah, very cute, Swami; you're putting in a plug." However, for me, if this idea doesn't materialize, I don't lose anything. And if it comes, I don't gain anything. Simply, an idea came into my mind some months back, and I told these kids about it and now they are working on it. Instead of going to do this work in a vast field, I just wanted to set an example in one place, a small place, say about 500 to 1,000 acres of land, an experimental world. And this place



*The joy of cooking—and serving—at Yogaville*



we can think of as a world in itself. We can see whether we can live together, all loving and giving, as one family. There will be no "mine" and "thine." It will be "ours." Let people come and see that, and let such communities, Yogavilles, spread out all over. Then, the whole country will be a Yogaville. It can happen. That's my dream.

Some people are now looking for land in the Virginia area. I'm going tomorrow morning to see the land. We have that dream. Let us just live together. Nobody will be idle here. Whatever you can do, just do it. There will be a common school, maybe even a common kitchen for the entire village. There's no need for each house to have a kitchen. Imagine that there are a hundred families living in Yogaville. If each one wants its own kitchen, there will be a hundred kitchens, a hundred stoves, a hundred cooks. And each one will buy small amounts of materials and products. When you buy a little, the price is more; but when you buy truckloads, it's cheaper. Instead of a hundred gas stoves, there will be one huge gas stove cooking for all the people. When you cook more, the taste is also better. You can

buy things cheaply, by the truckload, and you can have expert cooks. When there are a handful of expert cooks, if they cook beautiful food, tasteful food, all can enjoy. And you will have lots of free time, because you're not cooking in your own home; you don't wash all the dishes.

We can rotate the work. One batch of people will cook this week, another batch next week. Everything common. Those who can come to eat, can come to eat in the dining hall. If they cannot come, food can be sent to them by different carriers.

Also, there will be one school for the children. There will be no classrooms. The very nature, itself, is a classroom. There will be no particular curriculum or particular subjects or particular time. When the children want to learn something, the teacher should teach. For example, they will probably ask such questions as: "Mama, what is this?" "That is an apple." "Oh, an apple! How did it come?" "Well, look at the tree over there." In this way, you can teach geography, chemistry, mathematics, natural history. And you can teach a little spirituality, too. So that's like a natural college.



*Integral Yoga Natural Foods , Charlottesville, Virginia*

What's more, there will be a universal place for meditation. I imagine having a lotus-like place of worship. Each petal of the lotus will represent a religion, and the central part will be the common place where they will all meet.

So much, so much can be done. And, God willing, it will happen very soon, and you will be able to come and visit. In fact, those of you who want to come to help with this project should not lose such an opportunity. Please don't think that we are begging for something. No. A *sannyasin* never goes with a begging bowl. He just spreads the idea, and if it is useful and if God is willing, things will happen. And, somehow, it is happening.

I just want to set an example, to show how beautiful the world can be. It will be a miniature world. And if a hundred people can live like this, why not a thousand people? Why not ten thousand? We can do that. That is the only way to save the world and to find a "heaven on earth." Without our changing, we can't change the world. It's not only charity that begins at home; even divinity begins at home. Everything begins at home. Yoga begins at home. Without your being a yogi, you cannot spread Yoga. Without your being peaceful, you cannot bring peace to others.

*In July 1979, during satsang at Yogaville-East, a student asked Gurudev to share some of the reasons why the ashram was being moved from Connecticut to Virginia. Gurudev's reply was:*

Well, I don't need to give a long answer to this question. In simple words, we are happy here, everything is growing beautifully, no doubt. But it came into our minds to move to a warmer climate where we could have a longer growing season and where it would be less expensive to keep ourselves warm. When the spring comes, everybody is

so happy and healthy, moving around beautifully. All the faces are lit. Even guests prefer the warmer weather.

So, as a growing community, we thought that we would be well off in a little warmer place where we can grow more things and live with less expense. That's the main reason. Other than that, we love this place; we love our community. We still don't know what type of community we will be facing in Buckingham, but in our heart, we have confidence: if we are good even in hell we can be happy; we can make a heaven out of hell.

When we came here, we knew nobody. Six people came. Yet, it grew like this. So it is because of you people. Wherever you go, you can bring sunshine, sunlight. But, we cannot change Nature, so that's why we

thought of moving. Also, because of our family members living outside the community, in different places, and they all feel that they'd like to live more closely in the same area, the same compound. Here, we don't have enough

room for that. If we have larger acreage, we can build more houses in a special section for families, we can have another section for single people, other areas for industry, school, a clinic, and so forth. This is the idea of Yogaville, anyway. So, it's for future growth. I thought that it would be beneficial, but, again, I am not the one to do everything. I can only offer the idea. But if people think that it's a good idea—even though it may be a little difficult in the beginning—and then later on, everyone will benefit, then it's fine if they want to go; it's not just for me.

So, I will take this opportunity to tell the ashramites, too. Please don't move because I brought forth the idea. I thought of you, your growth. It will be good for your future. For me, it doesn't matter. It's not for one person. Of course, it's not that easy. Good things are always difficult to do, to achieve, but it's worth it.

**Good things are  
always difficult  
to do, to achieve;  
but it's worth it.**





*Sri Gurudev in front of the downtown New York IYI on Thirteenth Street in Greenwich Village*

through the years, more and more of Gurudev's students moved into Integral Yoga Institutes. Experiencing the benefits of living together as a community, these people expressed the desire to create larger ashram communities, where more people could live simply and work harmoniously, following the yogic guidelines, in a healthy, natural environment. Thus, the first Krishnananda Ashram-Yogaville opened its doors in Siegler Springs, California, in April 1972. And Yogaville-East was established in Pomfret Center, Connecticut, also

in April 1972. Like Gurudev's ashram in Sri Lanka, these ashram communities initiated cottage industries to support their members, and Ashram members created or joined local volunteer fire departments and rescue squads, and they planted organic gardens. As the communities became more and more established, they offered a number of programs for non-residents: workshops, retreats, month-long Teacher Training programs, summer programs for children, and Bharata Natyam dance camps for students and teachers.



*Sri Gurudev initiates the first American disciples into the Holy Order of Sannyas;  
Yogaville-East, July 1975.*



*Sri Gurudev poses with the first Integral Yoga Ministers after their ordination;  
Yogaville-East, July 1980.*



## MY ANCHOR, MY GOAL, MY GURU, MY GOD

His Holiness The Reverend Sri Swami Satchidananda is my Anchor, my Goal, my Guru, my God.

The first hint that I had of Sri Gurudev and the teachings of Integral Yoga came through a group of out-of-work actors in New York City in the late 60s. We had banded together, hoping to maintain our creative skills until our next "big break." In fact, we tried Fritz Pearl's 1960's psychology: "If, by chance, we find each other, it's beautiful. If not, it cannot be helped." His words sounded great but left me feeling empty when I applied them to my daily life.

Next, someone introduced Scientology. This system seemed quite powerful and intriguing, but it soon became apparent that it was not the way for me. The group moved on to theater games, which, although they were fun, did not seem

to provide me with the experience that I was seeking. And then, one evening, one of the members mentioned that she had just returned from a Ten-day Integral Yoga Retreat. Having taken classes every day during the retreat, she thought that she could remember enough to take us through a Hatha Yoga class. So, we got down on the floor, and she instructed us in a few poses. Then, she led us into deep relaxation. And, finally, she ended with the words, *OM Shanthi*.

*OM Shanti*. I had never heard these words before, so I had no idea what they meant. But, instantly, I began to cry. Somehow, I felt that I had found a long, lost friend, that something deep within me had suddenly awakened. I felt that I had finally come home.

Within a few weeks, I realized that my theater group could take me no further, and I began to look for the source of this *OM Shanthi*. A waitress friend told me of a place

called the Integral Yoga Institute on Thirteenth Street. She said that I would have to put up with some strange chanting but that she had found the "exercises" to be really great for her body. So, I got up my courage, and, one Saturday morning, I walked into the IYI. And there he was, The Reverend Sri Swami Satchidananda, or, as he was affectionately known in those days, "Swamiji." Actually, he was not there in person, but a large poster of his face hung on one wall. That was enough for me. I gazed at the poster and felt that he was looking back at me. Those eyes were really looking at me. And in those eyes, I saw all the love that I had spent my whole life searching for.

Day after day, I returned to the IYI, struggling through hours of classes just to see that poster. I did *Karma Yoga* at the

reception desk just so that I could gaze at that face. And then, one day, I was told that Swamiji would be at the IYI on the following weekend—

### ***OM Shanti*. I had never heard these words before.**

and, I was invited to join a group of residents and *Karma Yogis* to have lunch with him. I was amazed at such an opportunity, but I was also a bit frightened by the prospect.

The morning of the luncheon, I woke up, dressed, and started out for the IYI. But on my way there, I somehow felt overwhelmed by the thought of seeing Swamiji in person. So, I turned around and went back home. It would be several months before I had another opportunity to see Swamiji. He had returned to participate in "The Swami and the Rabbi" program. Off I went that evening, and there he was, in person. He was radiant, peaceful, and filled with wisdom, truth and compassion. I knew, immediately, that I had experienced something divine.

Ever since that day, I have stayed close to the burning fire of Swamiji's love, and, many times, I have had the grace of his eyes falling upon me. His example and his teachings have given me the strength to quit smok-

ing, to overcome chronic colitis, and to experience a sense of self-worth that I had never dreamed possible. Moreover, through the *sangha*, I have found a spiritual partner who inspires me to keep practicing and to share the fruits of those practices with others.

Finally, because of the glorious teachings of Integral Yoga so beautifully exemplified in Gurudev's life, I now enjoy a happy, healthy, prosperous, and meaningful life. If I had to describe Gurudev in one sentence, I would choose the following one from the *Thirukurral*: "As to those that love, they will give their very bones for helping others." —*Maji Sollecito*

## THE LIGHT ON THE DARK SIDE OF ME

*Life has meaning only in the struggle. Triumph or defeat is in the hands of the Gods. So, let us celebrate the struggle.*

—*Swahili warrior song*

I first became a devotee of Sri Gurudev in early 1966. I didn't know at that time what a devotee was, but, as a young hippie, I was entranced by a poster that I had purchased in New York's Greenwich Village. With patchouli incense wafting through the air, listening to the sitar music of Ravi Shankar, I loved to sit for long periods of time gazing at the poster, which was a picture of Gurudev seated outdoors in Paris. It was this poster that Conrad Rooks had used to promote his film, *Chappaqua*. Conrad had been studying Yoga with Gurudev in Sri Lanka, and in connection with the film, he brought Gurudev to the West. The title of the poster, printed on the bottom, was a small word: GURU. I read this word over and over, pondering its meaning.

It was finally in 1974 that I first heard Gurudev speak and learned the meaning of

the word *guru*: remover of darkness. I love that definition, because it so beautifully describes the process that I embarked on when I met my Guru and he became what the songwriter, Seals, describes in his song "Kiss from a Rose," as "the light on the dark side of me." For that is what Swami Satchidananda became for me. From the moment that I could understand what it meant to have a Guru, I have felt the deepest gratitude to him for "enlightening" me.

It's been a long, hard journey from darkness to light. It has been a process of working through unresolved issues from the past and, at the same time, learning the disciplines of the science of Yoga. It has been a powerful process of illuminating every nook and cranny of my body-mind-spirit through a willingness to allow all these issues to emerge from the shadows into the light. And I could not have done this without the help of Sri Gurudev's teachings, patience, love, grace, and guidance.

As I reflect upon these past thirty years I feel so blessed and grateful to have witnessed the numerous ways in which Sri Gurudev has touched and transformed so many lives. But I am also aware of how many of us have misunderstood some very essential aspects of Gurudev's teachings. For example, I often meet devotees and

**GURU. I read this word over and over, pondering its meaning.**

students of Sri Gurudev who are struggling with what they see as a distinction between the "spiritual" and the "material." Maybe because I have been fortunate enough to have traveled with Gurudev to nearly every part of the world and to

have seen him in almost every kind of situation, it's more clear to me that spirituality is our intrinsic nature. That is to say, spirituality is not something that we practice, that we do, that we think about. It's who we are.

So, here is this enlightened being, our spiritual master, in New York City, shopping with others in the midst of a very busy

electronics store, and there he is, the same person, with the same "level" of spirituality sitting on a dais with the Dalai Lama at the Parliament of the World's Religions. In other words, he is fully engaged in life, at every moment, regardless of where he is. And he isn't trying to make one situation more spiritual than another or make it into something that it's not. He is the same: harmonious, genuine, in touch with who he is at every moment and wherever he goes.

Ram Dass once said, "We think that we are human beings trying to become spiritual. When, really, we are spiritual beings who need to learn how to be human." I love that statement, because it really summarizes what I have learned from all my years of serving Sri Gurudev. It's all about a spirituality that walks the earth. Gurudev has said that the entire nature is like a big university from which we can draw many lessons. Yet, I come across many "yogis" who continually express that they feel like "strangers in a strange land." These "new-agers" spend a good part of their day trying to tune out the earth plane and to tune into some other dimension of other worldliness. I believe that they are missing the point that Gurudev makes. Gurudev always compares mastering life to learning how to surf. You don't learn how to surf in a cave. You may start small, but, as you grow and develop as a surfer, you seek out bigger and better waves. Why? For fun and for further development!

If we are enrolled in the "Earth University" for a purpose, maybe we need to stop trying to drop out. I feel fortunate in that I got the chance to begin to integrate my spiritual beingness with being on the earth, with all the challenges that that experience entails. And this is what I think Sri Gurudev means when he often says, "Obstacles are tests that draw out our inner capabilities." This is the place that is going to help me learn what I need to learn in order to better integrate my spiritual-

ity. And, yes, this is the place—in the middle of life in a big city, in the midst of family life, in the experiences of life's traumas and dramas, and not necessarily in a Himalayan cave.

I used to think that enlightenment was something like the spiritual version of being struck by lightning: a flash of light; you're knocked out; and those who do survive are never the same! But, actually, this image of being somehow "transformed in the moment" seems nothing less than "magical thinking." Something like how a child might imagine "Superspiritual Person" as the one who enters

a phone booth, dons a cape, and emerges with superpowers! In the name of the "Big E" (Enlightenment), isn't it possible that we have inflated to extraordinary realms something that

is much more real and down to earth? Something as simple as living a balanced life?

If I really examine my life closely, I can say that I'm pretty content and happy. Sure, things still get to me, but not as much and for not as long. I remember who I am in the midst of the traumas and dramas of life, and, most of the time, I guess that I'm "managing gracefully," to use Buddhist teacher and psychotherapist Sylvia Boorstein's phrase. And do you know what? That's pretty darn wonderful! But how can this experience feel wonderful if I am forever comparing it to that great "enlightenment experience in the sky," an image that many people hold onto. Hopefully, though, we are growing older and wiser and able to let go of this magical thinking, recognizing that what we have already achieved may be terrific. For example, are we handling things more easily and peacefully? Can we say that even though life situations may be tough from time to time, we seem to be able to recognize that nothing lasts forever and that this, too, shall pass? That when things are not going well, we are able to touch a place inside ourselves that reminds us that happiness is our true nature. That even if we're thrown by

### **Obstacles are tests that draw out our inner capabilities.**







the curve balls of life, it takes less and less time to get recentered. I guess that's what enlightenment looks like to me.

Finally, I feel very grateful to Sri Gurudev for the great blessing of his example. How fortunate we are that he has spent thirty years in the West with us. He has walked this earth alongside us and has shown us that being enlightened doesn't mean that you don't have a personality, that you don't enjoy life, or that you don't fully participate in life. What it does mean is that *you* have life—life doesn't have you! That, to me, is the secret of being able to live a spirituality that walks the earth with love and compassion. —Rev. Prem Anjali, Ph.D.

*Rev. Prem Anjali, Executive Director of the Office of Sri Gurudev and traveling assistant to Sri Gurudev, travels with him across the globe, organizing programs and attending Yoga conferences.*

## PERFECTION IN ACTION: REMEMBRANCES

In the early 1970s, Sri Gurudev paid a visit to the Los Angeles Integral Yoga Institute. It was an early winter day, and by nightfall the house had become quite cool. When Sri Gurudev's secretary requested that we turn up the heat, we found that the furnace was not working. We were an all-female household, and none of us were knowledgeable as to the mechanical workings of the furnace. So, we sent our apologies to Gurudev and tried to figure out what to do about this predicament. Within moments, Gurudev came down the stairs, asking to see the furnace.

Now the furnace room, with all its round ceiling pipes, seemed an ideal place to hang extra clothing, laundry, and so forth; so in order to get to the furnace, Gurudev had to push aside rows of skirts, pants, and shirts. He suggested that we find a more suitable place to hang our clothing as he kneeled down and began examining the furnace. Within a half hour, the furnace was hum-

ming, the house was warm, the Guru was resting, and we had been given a "hands-on" lesson about Yoga as perfection in action.

Our education along these lines continued. On another visit to Los Angeles, Gurudev walked over to the closet to hang up his robe. Looking into the closet, he noticed that some of the hangers were bent and twisted. He proceeded to remove the hangers, handing them to us and telling us to throw them away. We were somewhat surprised, since, over the years, Gurudev had taught us to use what we had and not to be wasteful. Sensing our confusion, he simply said, "Whatever you have should be beautiful."

Some years later, the Los Angeles IY had grown and so had we—we thought! We had a bigger house, more residents, and more classes.

One day, Gurudev was, again, paying us a visit. This time, as we all sat at his feet, Gurudev asked for a tape recorder. In those days, the reel-to-reel models were popular, so we brought one of those to Gurudev. The cords for this type of recorder were usually kept in a small opening on the side of the machine. When Gurudev pulled out the cord, he found it quite twisted and knotted. He held it up, looked at us lovingly, and explained that the way in which we keep the objects around us reflects the condition of our minds.

After this visit, the tape recorder cord was always straightened, neatly rewound, and carefully placed in the opening. And just by our being in his presence, some of our knots and bends were also removed and straightened out. —by Maji Sollecito

*The white clad flamingo flies  
through the sky,  
While she all the time keeps her  
young ones in her thoughts;  
They have been left behind,  
but she ever remembers them in her heart.  
Just so, the True Guru keeps the disciples  
pressed to his heart.  
By instilling in him the love of the Lord  
—Guru Ram Das*





*Asha Goodman and Sita Schoonover get a big hug from Sri Gurudev during their early years at the Vidyalayam.*

In 1975, at Yogaville-East in Pomfret Center, Connecticut, Sri Gurudev opened a pre-school for children ages three to five. Then, in 1977, he founded the Yogaville Vidyalayam (Temple of Learning), whose curriculum was grounded in such yogic principles as non-violence, truthfulness, and universal brotherhood. The Vidyalayam offered schooling at the pre-school, primary and secondary school levels.

When the Ashram moved to Buckingham, Virginia, the Vidyalayam was reestablished in the new Yogaville. Here,

the Vidyalayam faculty continues to provide a well-rounded and nurturing environment where children learn at their own pace, living and learning together in peace and harmony.

The following tributes to Sri Gurudev were composed by two dedicated and devoted Vidyalayam students: Asha Goodman and Sita Schoonover. Asha and Sita, both twelve years old, will be graduating from the Vidyalayam this year. The portrait of Sri Gurudev was drawn by another Vidyalayam student, ten-year-old Shakti Howeth.

## HAPPY MEMORIES

When I was asked to write something about Gurudev's life in America, one thing came to mind: all the happy memories of Gurudev coming to school.

I can remember all the excitement and preparation that we went through when we found out that Gurudev was coming to school. I can see him now. He is getting out of his car and we are greeting him. He is sitting down in the chair, just looking at us, and we are doing the *puja*.

I remember one time during a *puja* when it started to rain, and by the end of the *puja*, the rain had stopped and a rainbow appeared in the sky. It felt like the gods were showering their grace upon us.

In closing, I would just like to say that without Gurudev I don't know where I would be.

—Asha Goodman

## GURUDEV IS VERY SPECIAL TO ME

I have been a student at the Vidyalayan for the last six years. This is the only school that I have ever been to. I'll be graduating this year, and I'll miss Gurudev and the school.

Every year, Gurudev visits us at least twice. On these occasions, we have *padapuja* for him. My duty is to do the *arathi* when he enters the door and then during the *puja*. I put the *kumkum* on his forehead and on his feet.

We all have a great time with Gurudev as he has lunch with us and plays with us. He always brings us presents and candy. After he leaves, we all feel relaxed.

Gurudev is very special to me and will always be in my heart. I wish that I can still attend the *padapuja* even when I'm no longer a student at the Vidyalayan.

—Sita Schoonover





*Above and below: Sri Gurudev visiting with Vidyalayam students*







*LOTUS has been visited by thousands of people  
from all over the world and from all faiths and traditions.*

## THE LIGHT OF TRUTH UNIVERSAL SHRINE (LOTUS)

lotus flower in a garden grew,  
an emblem of Peace in a bower of dew;  
serene and fragrant, radiant bloom,  
which chased away all vibrations of gloom.  
like a Mystic, towards the Light inclined,  
upon a dark-green pad it sat  
blessing its own habitat.

The lotus is an ancient symbol of the human soul unfolding in the Light Divine. This water-lily grows up through mud and dirty water, blooming when it rises above the surface of the lake. Its petals close at dusk and open at dawn, in perfect harmony with the cycles of darkness and light. Water runs off the petals, so the flower is never wet. Just so, our own spiritual beauty can never be tainted; we can, if we choose, remain in the world, yet not of the world. . . fully opened to the Transcendental Light.

The LOTUS fantastically blends this lotus-symbol with the concept of spiritual unity. Carved altars rest beneath each petal, representing every major world faith, plus others less known and those yet to come. From the central altar, a column of flowing light rises to the pinnacle, where it then descends through softly lit tubes onto each surrounding altar. Thus is depicted the simple truth that we have had so much trouble grasping: that out of the One Light comes all—all spirituality, all scientific discovery, all philosophical wisdom, and all creative power.

Whatever our philosophy, we still embrace the same Universal Light. If we truly understand this simple concept—that we are literally made of the same universal substance—then the Light of Peace will dawn at last. Loving our neighbors as our own self is possible only if we recognize them as parts of ourselves. The human heart understands what the mind can never grasp. Without the concept of an enemy, harmony is our natural state.

—Rishikavi Raghudas

During Sri Gurudev's first years of service in the West, the Universalist Church in New York City became, for several years, the site of regular Friday night meetings, where students came to ask questions and to listen to Gurudev speak about the ancient wisdom of Yoga. On January 26, 1980, such a group met to learn more about a new and intriguing project: the Light Of Truth Universal Shrine. Sri Gurudev "enlightened" them with a comprehensive description of this propitious endeavor to be undertaken in Yogaville, Buckingham, Virginia.

## TRUTH IS ONE, PATHS ARE MANY

### Seeing everyone and everything as an expression of God

Probably, many of you remember the days, about ten years back, when we used to meet almost every week, on Fridays, at this beautiful church. This place of prayer has brought many yogis together: to think together, to walk together, to talk together, and to work together. So, I'm really very happy to be here once again, and I thank the present authorities, who are taking such good care of this place.

The Universalist Church is an appropriate place in which to talk about the universal approach of all the religions, which is the main purpose behind the entire LOTUS project. During the past few months, I have been in many cities on the West Coast and in the Mid-West, speaking to many gatherings about this project; and, of course, there were some questions. For example, I been asked: is it necessary to have a LOTUS? The question being asked is that with all the world's crises—hunger, lack of shelter, disease—do we really need to expend our energy in building something like a shrine. Actually, this is really a pertinent question, because we are more concerned about our day-to-day requirements: food, clothing, shelter, health, education. We can never deny that. Those are very important concerns. In fact, a hungry stomach won't allow you to think about God.



*Sri Gurudev giving satsang  
at the Universalist Church in New York City*

So, then, why don't we spend the money that is being collected to build LOTUS for these other important needs? I would like to answer that question.

In a way, I think that this project and any similar project that will bring people together, to make them love each other and to recognize the same self in others—which is the essential part of any religion—is of the utmost importance, more urgently important than feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, or providing shelter. You might, of course, wonder why. First, let's look for the reason why there are millions of starving

people. Why should there be starvation? Is it that there is too much population so there isn't enough food for everyone? Certainly not. It's not that we do not have enough food. World statistics clearly prove that there is plenty of food. It's said that the world has a population of about four and a half billion people. But do you know that we grow food to feed more than twelve billion people? Again, there are statistics to prove that. We have four and a half billion people but we have food enough for more than twelve billion. Three times more. Then why should there be hunger if it is not due to the lack of food? It is because of the lack of concern in the minds of people with respect to other people. It's because of the lack of love, the lack of caring and sharing, the lack of dedication—too much selfishness. It is the lack of these qualities that creates poverty, that creates hungry people. Wealth accumulates in one place, food accumulates in one place, and other things go without anything.

Do you know, in our own country, in America, how much food we waste on a given day, in individual homes, in restaurants

on airplanes and on ships? That's one side. And, then, there are the people who are in business. Do you know how much food is destroyed to keep prices up? To maintain prices, they destroy the excess.

The other day, I was in Tucson, Arizona where I was shown a beautiful, large plot of land where beautiful lettuce was growing. They just plucked only a very little part of the lettuce and left the rest to be plowed back into the earth. I asked them why, and they said, "Well, if we collect all the lettuce, then we cannot sell it at the price that we want to get. So, we are constantly interested in selling the



food and making money, not even thinking of the hungry people.

Mother Nature gives plenty, but we don't share. And most of these calamities are caused by the differences that have been developed in our minds. We deny our own fellow human beings. We divide them in the name of race, religion, caste, color, community, and what not. Wars are being created in the name of religion. Catholics fight with Protestants, Hindus fight with Muslims, Arabs fight with Hebrews—in the name of religion. Do you know another statistic, that there have been more people slaughtered on this earth in the name of religion and God than through all wars and natural disturbances? Is this the purpose of religion, then? To deny our own fellow human beings? We all look up and say that there is only one Father in Heaven, but when we look down, we don't see others as our brothers and sisters.

The very purpose of religion is to bring about that feeling of oneness, to experience that spiritual oneness. Not to deny people, but to see everyone and everything as an expression of God. If that feeling is instilled in our hearts, we certainly would not give room for these kinds of problems. Lack of understanding, lack of universal love, these are causes for all the problems in the world. That's why I say that anything you would do to educate people to realize the spiritual oneness, which is the basis of all religions, would solve all the problems. I don't say that we should not help the hungry or the poor or the sick, but let us not stop there. If we do that but then stop there, the help is only temporary. In this respect, the Hindus divide the charities in several ways: *anadhanam*, *swarnadhanam*, *vidyadhanam*, and *jnanadhanam*.

*Anadhanam* means offering food. When you give food to somebody, it might last for a few hours. Afterwards, he or she has to find someone else from whom to receive food. So, your charity by the way of giving food

lasts only for a few hours, and the person has to look for someone else from whom to receive more food. But if you give *swarnadhanam*, a little money, maybe the same person could buy food for a week or a month. That would last a little longer. But, still, that type of charity has its limitations, because once it's over, the person should look for someone else to give another hundred dollars. Instead, if you give someone

education, *vidyadhanam*, certainly he or she would be able to find a job, earn enough money, not only for him- or herself, but also for the family. But, again, that type of charity would not guarantee the recipient's

peace. Yes, that individual would be able to get money for food and clothing, but that wouldn't make him or her a person of wisdom. That individual would still be in trouble. Why? Because many people fight amongst each other. Not because they don't have enough food, clothing, or shelter, but because they develop greed, hatred and jealousy. So, even education is not enough. You may have scholarship; all right, let the person become a B. A., M. A., Ph.D. But that degree won't assure the peace and joy of that person. However, if you give that person *jnanadhanam*, the charity of wisdom, if you give that person his or her own Self, helping the person to recognize the Self, to realize the Self, and to see the same Self in everybody, then you have really helped in the right way. And once that realization happens, food will come, money will come, health will come, peace will come—everything will come. Doesn't the Bible say that? *Seek ye the Kingdom of God and everything else will be added unto you.* You don't need to go after things, one by one. They will all follow you if you realize the One that is to be realized.

God, or the Self, your own Self, or the God within, or you as the image of God. Put it any way you want. You are the image of God. You are the Self. Once you realize that,

### **Mother Nature gives plenty, but we don't share.**

that you are the image of God, then you have the capacity to see everything, everybody as the image of God. You have acquired the proper eye of wisdom to see God in every face. You are seeing with Divine Vision.

It's not the physical eye that you are using. You are using the Super Eye, the Third Eye, the Divine Eye. With the physical eye, you see only the physical body. But to see everybody as God, you should have that godly vision. This means that you should have realized the God within. In fact, it is because of a few

such great men and women that the world is still surviving. And that's the very reason

why they are worshiped by millions. Great sages, saints and prophets all over the world, they never got limited to one area of the globe. You ask Jesus or Moses or Mohammed or Shankara, "To whom do you belong?" Once Archarya Shankara said, "You are asking for my address? All the three worlds are my address. You can just drop the letter anywhere with the name, 'Shankara,' and it will come to me." Simply drop a letter addressed to 'Santa Claus, North Pole,' it will get to him. Because these individuals are not limited by geographical area, by color, caste, language. No. Because they have realized the Infinite. You may say, "My Jesus," but Jesus would never limit himself. No. In fact, He might even feel unhappy if you were to say, "He's my Jesus," and He might ask, "Why do you want to possess me? I belong to everyone."

#### **Balance of mind, purity of heart**

That kind of universal love, based on the realization of God within, is the essential purpose behind any religion. All other things are just labels, and the labels may vary. That's why we say that paths may be many, but there's only one truth behind them. It's not only this LOTUS project. This one idea came; fine, we're doing it. But anything that you would do to bring people together, to

make them feel that they are one in spirit, is the same Light project. You bring Light, you have the Light and shed it to others. It is with this idea in mind that we wanted to build a chapel, a shrine, so that, the minute you walk in, you will see chapels for all the various religions under one dome.

As many of you know, I have traveled around the world many times, constantly, but I have never seen anything like a LOTUS. Yes, there are Light temples. For example, Ramalinga Swamigal of South India was a

great believer in the Cosmic Light. And he built a beautiful temple where there was only a light. He

said, "Let us all worship that Light and get enlightened." But, here, we have the light in the middle and, at the same time, we say, "You don't need to deny your faith. You don't need to switch paths." Sometimes, people get this idea: is the Swami asking us to leave our faith and to follow another one? No. You don't need to leave your faith. How can I say, "You renounce your mother and love my mommy?" As I love my mommy, you should love your mommy. But the only thing that I do say is that while you keep loving your mommy, do not hate other mommies, do not deny other mommies, do not say that only your mommy is the most loving person. As a matter of fact, if you were ever to get on a platform, proclaiming, "Only my mommy is the most loving," you will be stoned to death, because, indirectly, you are putting down all other mommies. It's a sort of blind love. But because you do love your mommy, you should become aware of what you are saying. Your love should not disturb other people's love for their mommies. We all love our mommies. Isn't it nice to think "As I love my mommy, I would love your mommy, too." Would you object to that? No. Then, every home becomes my home. I can just go into any home and say, "Mommy give me something!"

In this way, you don't lose anything. You gain the whole world. And that is what we see in the great saints and sages. They loved everybody, no matter what they were. You know, sometimes, even people who don't believe in God, the non-believers, you love them, too. Why? Because today's non-believer may be tomorrow's great believer! Today's sinner could be tomorrow's saint, we say. Today's Olympic champion might have been a crawling baby a few years back. You forget that you, yourself, were crawling the time. Now, because you are running, you criticize those crawling babies. No; we all grow in our own time. We have no

right to criticize anyone, even the so-called non-believer. At least that individual believes in not believing everything. That is a belief. Let him or her begin from that.

That is the overall image of the true religion. Your mind should expand like that, without any limitations whatsoever. It is to open up the mind, making it possible to think universally, that the scriptures ask us to follow certain guidelines. For example, the Ten Commandments and similar precepts are just to help us get rid of these limitations, to help us not to deny others, to help us to get out of this "I," "me," "mine." And that is what you call "purity of heart, balance of mind." The Yogis call it *balance of mind*. The Bible calls it *purity of heart*. Patanjali Yoga says, "Without that balance of mind, you cannot experience God." The Bible says that without purity of heart, you can never see God: "Blessed are the pure in heart. They shall see God." There's no difference at all. So it is to make people realize this one truth that we want to have special places.

In my own humble life, this idea started sometime in 1953. It just happened one day, a holy day. The Hindus have a holy day set apart—something like our Mother's Day and Father's Day—for the Gurus. We call it Guru

Poornima. It is celebrated on the full moon day in the month of July and is dedicated to respecting and worshiping the Guru, with the reassurance of devotion and loyalty to the Guru's teachings. Every Hindu would observe that day by performing a special *puja* [worship service], reading the teachings given by that Guru, and spending the entire day in more seriously following the practices.

### **Yoga Ecumenical Service (YES)**

So, in 1953, while I was in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), an idea came to me just a few days before Guru Poornima. Because I always moved with everybody, I had many Buddhist, Catholic and

Muslim friends, and I said to them regarding this holiday, "This is the day dedicated to worshiping the Guru. Why don't we all do something jointly? Why should I worship only my Guru? Why not worship your Guru, too, if you don't mind worshiping my Guru, also? Come on; let's bring all the Gurus together." Well, we gathered together pictures of all the great sages and saints, decorated them, and, then, celebrated that day.

It was beautiful. Love was flowing. Everybody was hugging one another, saying, "Oh, we feel as one family today." I really enjoyed the taste of it, and I became addicted. I wanted that to happen more often. So, since that time, every year, we started doing that. After a few years, we started holding monthly group meetings where various clergy came together. But I always thought that it would be nice to have a place where we could always meet. Therefore, when I came to this country, it also happened that way. Without my even going to search for a few rabbis, Catholic monks, Zen monks, they all became my friends, and we used to gather and meet. Then, during one of our ten-day retreats, I invited all of them. They gave talks, describing the essential points behind their particular faiths, just to illustrate that, fundamen-





*A 1987 Yoga Ecumenical Service (YES)*

tally, they are all one and the same. But, on the final day, I remarked, "We have been talking all these days. Shall we *do* something? What shall we *do*? It was then, on the spur of the moment, that an idea came: "Come on; let's arrange a nice altar with a big light in the middle. We'll sit around it, and we'll worship that light in our own, traditional way. You are a Catholic; you worship in your way. I am a Hindu; I'll worship in my way. A Zen, in his own way." And that was the beginning of our use of the term, YES. We heard the word yes. God said, **YES**, which stands for **Yoga Ecumenical Service**.

#### **The Light Of Truth Universal Shrine**

However, even that didn't make me all happy. I became a little more greedy. And the result is the LOTUS. We said, "We want to have a place open to all. Let people come, let them see that under one roof, there are all the chapels. Whatever you prefer—stand, sit, pray, meditate. But if you turn to any side, you will still see the light." I imagined that one central light would be beamed up and then split into rays and that each ray would fall on one shrine, one chapel. Each chapel would be very simple, an altar with an open scripture of that faith. That's all. We

didn't want to complicate it. So, each altar would have the scripture of that faith, and the one light would go upward with the rays falling on each scripture. That would be on the upper floor.

Then, just below, on the ground or entrance level, there would still be the same round hall, but right below each altar, along side the wall, there would be shelves filled with scriptures pertaining to that particular religion. And there would be symbols. And there would be like a library. Perhaps later on there would be an audio-visual presentation. You would press a button, and you would learn about how the religion originated, who the founder was, how many followers there were, what the basic principles behind the religion were, and what the various holidays and observances were. You'd get an idea about the nature of all the religions. In the middle, there would be a sort of hall where clergy people could sit and discuss various topics. And the whole structure would be built in the shape of a lotus flower set in the middle of a beautiful lake, because where else would a lotus grow?

Fortunately, God has provided us with a large tract of land in Virginia. You may



*Meditation in the upper sanctuary at LOTUS*

wonder why we should go all the way to Virginia, why not go somewhere close to New York. Certainly, I wouldn't have hesi-

tated to do that if I could have gotten at least five hundred acres of land near New York [laughter from the audience]. The property



*A view of LOTUS and the lake from Kailash*

in Virginia consists of about six hundred fifty acres. And, unlike the Hudson River in New York, the James River is still unpolluted, so the setting is more natural. We're planning to build a Yoga town, and the main focus of this town will be the LOTUS.

Of course, the LOTUS need not be only there in Virginia. Gradually, such shrines will spring up all over. But LOTUS will be the beginning. I am sure that once people see the LOTUS, they will want to have one in their own state. And why not? I'm sure that it will happen. But, someone has to begin somewhere. So, it's a humble beginning; and I would certainly request that you all think of it, and if you all really feel that it is important, that it's going to help people and that this kind of understanding is very important for our peace and harmony, then come forward and do whatever you can toward the realization of the project.

Just before I arrived here tonight, one of the students asked me, "Don't you think that people will look down on us if we ask for contributions?" So far, we have never asked. But my answer was that even the Bible says, "Ask and it shall be given." Moreover, you are not asking for your own sake, for your family, or for something personal. Rather, it is for everybody.

All of a sudden, an analogy comes to mind. In your own body, every few hours, your stomach asks for food. Is it not so? But why don't you say to your stomach: "Aren't you ashamed to ask for food every now and then? It's a shame. Why do you ask?" If ever you ask this question to the stomach, the stomach would say, "Sir/Madam it's not just for me. Don't ever think that all that you put in stays here. If by any chance, I would leave it all there, I would, very soon, end up in the hospital. I have to work. I have to convert the food into energy, into blood and, then, send it to all the different limbs. It's not

for me. Of course, I will also get a little of all that. Certainly, because I am working for you, I must have some energy, so I take a little bit. But, if I keep much more than I need, there will be fermentation. There will be acidity. There will be gas.

In the same way, just imagine that I am the stomach and you are all the limbs.

Someone has to do the job, that's all. Don't think that I am in any way egoistic in doing this project. But somebody has to do it. Maybe God just put that idea into this head. But if someone else

would come forward and say, "Why you and not me?" then I would say, "All right please take it over and do the job. I will do whatever you say."

"It doesn't matter who pounds; you only want rice." This is a proverb in India. In other words, it doesn't matter who pounds, whether it is A or B or C. All we are interested in is something concrete happening for the benefit of humanity. So, it doesn't belong to one organization, though you might see that the IYI members are coming forward. Even they themselves, could say, "Why should the IYI do this since LOTUS is a separate organization? LOTUS is not an IYI. It's not even part of Satchidananda Ashram. It is incorporated as a separate corporation: LOTUS, Inc. It is for everybody.

### **The architecture**

As of now, we have plans to build the LOTUS 108 feet in diameter, including the open petals. The inside dome will be exactly half of that, 54 feet. Why 108? It just happens to be a holy number used by many people. More or less, the 108 stands for God. The zero in the middle is exactly like the zero in the middle of the word God, is it not so? G-O-D. So, 108 and G O D; the "1" represents the first manifestation of that "0" the unmanifested one, and the "8" represents the ultimate multi-manifestation, b





*The Holy Yantra imprinted on the cover of the gem box  
that is buried under the center of the LOTUS foundation*

cause it's double "0," one over the other. "Eight" is nothing but double "0," one over the other. And the eight, if you put it horizontally, it stands for infinity, is it not so? See? "1," finite; "8," infinite; and, in between, the Absolute, neither finite nor infinite. No one knows what it is—zero. It's complete. And, actually, that represents God.

Of course, we are allotting as much land as we need. At least, we would like to include a big lake, fifteen to twenty acres. And the lake, itself, would probably be in the shape of a nice leaf. The other day, I was just simply drawing some plans for the lake, and it automatically came out in the shape of a Bodhi leaf. Do you know the Bodhi? Many of you who are familiar with the Buddhist teachings will know what a Bodhi tree is. It's the tree under which Lord Buddha got enlightened. It has a unique leaf. I have never seen a leaf like that on any other tree. It's almost like the spade in playing cards. No other leaf has that kind of pointed tip. More than a third of the length of the leaf is the tip, and it's sort of heart shaped, with a long tip. So, the whole lake will be like that. Also, we have creeks on the property, so the

two creeks will fall into that heart-shaped lake; then, at the end, where the tip begins, there will be a dam to fill the lake with water. There will also be a sluice. The water will overflow and will then flow into the stream, reaching the river.

And the stem of the leaf will be the entry road. As the stem of the leaf meets the leaf itself, it will protrude a little inside, and, then, you will have the round LOTUS there. So, you will have the LOTUS in the big lake. And I have it in mind that all around the lake, people of various faiths will build their own shrines. In the dome, there will be only altars, but on the outside of the lake, there will be shrines typical of the different faiths: a mosque, a church, Buddhist and Shinto temples, a Hindu temple and a synagogue. We are allotting at least a hundred acres for that purpose. But, if we want, we can use more, because I told God, "You take whatever you want; leave the rest to us." And, He was pleased with that.

By the way, it will be on April 30, a full moon day, that we will begin to dig the lake. The project is already in process. We won't be waiting until we get all the contributions.



*Sri Gurudev performing the puja during the LOTUS groundbreaking ceremony in 1982*

Let them come. But, with whatever we have in hand, we will begin with the work. So far, all these years, I have been going around, giving talks in various places. To those who invite me, I don't even ask for any honorarium. But some people sometimes do give me an honorarium, and I have put all that away for this purpose. So, I will be using most of that money to begin the work, because I believe in doing something so that others will have more faith. When they see something happening, then they will know positively, "Yes, it's true; it's not just a dream; it's really happening. So, to all those who want to take part in digging the lake, come to Virginia on the 30th of April. You are all welcome. Come with a shovel. But I will be on a big bulldozer. Yes, I think that God will keep me strong for that work.

#### **The Form of LOTUS and the Yantra**

Someone has asked whether the form of the LOTUS is like a three-dimensional Yantra that will radiate Divine energy through its very structure. Hmm. That's a beautiful question, and I'm glad that someone thought to ask it.

Normally, I don't really want to elaborate on that subject too much, because these

are all very sacred objects, with a lot hidden in them; and the minute you expose them they tend to become cheapened. However, having received this question, I should say a little bit about it.

As many of us already know, certain geometrical figures have the capacity to act as receptive objects to certain holy vibrations—and, in the same way, to unholiness, vibrations, also. The three-dimensional structure, according to the Hindu *tantric* way, called *mehru*. This is a structural form that would receive, and even attract, like a lightning rod. When lightning strikes somewhere, the lightning rod attracts it, and this is the very reason why most holy places have a pointed tower. Hindu temples also have that. In fact, they even have golden pyramids to receive certain forces. Of course, many of you already know about the effect of pyramids. I have even seen people walking around with a sort of metallic pyramid on their head. It's all true, although some of the scientists may not believe it because it's not "proved." Okay, so it hasn't been proved, but just because it hasn't been proved, should you deny it? No. Has it been proved that it's no good? No. You don't need to prove that



*Sri Gurudev working on the placement of the central light in the upper sanctuary of LOTUS*



it's good. If someone were to say to me, "Prove that it's beneficial," then I would say, "Prove that it's dangerous."

We don't always need to look for proofs. We believe. Indeed, there are many things that our little intellects cannot understand and grasp. But many holy people, many great minds have received many ideas. Even before the invention of various modern instruments, they were able to perceive atoms and their movements. They were able to perceive the movements of the galaxy. Today, we talk a lot about astronomy. But thousands of years back, they knew exactly how the planets moved and how to calculate their movements. What's more, they never had any special equipment for that.

We should not always depend on physical equipment. The mind is the biggest equipment. If you could refine your mind, your mind would grasp a lot. But it's impossible for the same mind to explain to other minds that aren't that sensitive. It's a matter of experience.

To make an analogy, it's like a little three-year-old girl asking her mother, "Mommy, tell me: how did you experience conceiving me?" There are many mothers who would say, "Well, I ate some pumpkin;" but, really it's impossible for her to explain. How on earth is the mother going to make that three-year-old girl experience what she, the mother, experienced? But, actually, the real question posed by the little girl, who was two or three years old, was: "Mommy, what is this? You put me into bed, kiss me and say goodnight, and then I can't go to sleep right away because I hear a lot of giggling and this and that coming from you and daddy in your room. What's happening there? You don't seem to sleep a lot. I even hear the whole bed shaking!"

What could the mother answer? Of course, nowadays even an elementary school child is taught what's happening, and, right away, they have to experiment. Education. Modern education, where nothing should be kept secret from children, where we have to

tell them everything, and where they, themselves, have to go and experiment. But imagine the mother saying, "Child, it's not possible to tell you what that is. Please wait, and, believe me, one day you will know." "Hah; that so, mother?" "Yes, my child; wait." And the child trusts the mama, so she waits. Finally, the child grows into a woman and gets married. After a few nights, the mother asks her daughter, "Child, what's happening? There is a lot of giggling going on." Her daughter responds, "Mommy, aren't you ashamed to ask me this question? You're embarrassing me, Mommy." "Oh, my sweet girl, didn't you embarrass me one day by asking this question?" "Oh, I do remember but if I had known that this is what was happening, I wouldn't have asked you!"

You see? Certain things can never be explained to your satisfaction or to give you the experience. You have to experience yourself. But wait until you become mature. Everything is like that. Until then, you just believe: "Yes. Mama said so. There's something nice happening. Okay. All right."

Even in the spiritual life, there are limits like that. For example, we cannot extend the analogy to the *Yantra* that we've been discussing. The *Yantra* has a tremendous capacity to receive Divine vibration. And not only the Hindu faith, but other faiths as well have this tradition of inscribing *mantras* and *yantras* and using them in their worship. For instance, our Jewish friends do that when they put the *mazzuzot* at the threshold of a room. Every house will have something inscribed and fixed there to protect the house. What is it, then? Every letter emits its own vibration. Every living thing emits a vibration. Whether you know it or not. A cross emits a certain holy vibration. A Star of David emits a certain vibration. And the person who wears it will be protected by it, will experience that vibration—whether he or she knows it or not. Even a non-believer has to face that fact. Whether you believe it or not, if you put your finger into the fire, it will burn. Y

on't need to be a believer to know that.

So, holy objects have been given to us by those who, by experience, have seen something holy in them. And the *Yantra* is one of those objects. It has such power, in fact, that you don't even have to do anything. You simply go inside, wait, and you will feel the Divine vibrations.

Yes, the LOTUS is going to be a beautiful place of healing. It's designed that way. But I really don't want to say too much, to make big promises. Let it happen. When there is something beautiful, it will be revealed in its own time. For if the flower is good, there will be fragrance, there will be honey, and the bees will come to it. No flower sends out advertisements or invitations to the bees. If the flower has honey, the bees will come. In the same way, if the tree is laden with fruits, bats will come. No tree sends invitations: "Come, bat; I am ready with fruits!" No. So let's cultivate that kind of environment. Let's plant the tree. Let it grow. Let us nourish it. Let it bring forth its fruits. You will be proud of it. You will all be

proud even to think that you had a share in it, that you contributed something to this end.

I don't want you to miss that. Tell your friends, too. It's a golden opportunity. Don't think that we are asking you. Rather, it's a privilege to come and to take part in it. It will be your special privilege. We should think of it in that way. It's not begging. If it were for me, then I would be begging. But it's not for me. It's God's command. It's for everybody. So do not miss the privilege. And tell your friends to take part in it.

I thank you for giving me this little opportunity even to present this project to you. Let's make it into a reality. Thank you, and God be with you. May He fill your life with His Light so that you may enjoy health and happiness, peace and prosperity and so that you can share the same with all those who come around you. May the Lord lead us from the unreal to the real, from the darkness of ignorance to the light of wisdom, from the life of death to the abode of immortality. OM Shanthi, Shanthi, Shanthi. OM Peace, Peace, Peace be unto all. Thank you.



*Devotees celebrating the vision of unity embodied in the LOTUS*



### *The Integral Yoga Yantra*

*As Sri Gurudev revealed in his 1980 talk at the Universalist Church in New York City, the yantra is not only a symbolic representation of the entire cosmos, but it is also a holy object and, like the Jewish Star of David and the Christian Cross and other sacred objects, a powerful receiver of Divine vibrations. In the following description, Sri Gurudev more fully explains the characteristics of the Integral Yoga Yantra.*

#### **THE MEANING OF THE YANTRA**

Integral Yoga is a complete Yoga, and the Integral Yoga Yantra is also complete. It is a representation of the entire cosmos.

Sometimes, external images are used

in meditation or worship to symbolize or express certain divine ideas and qualities. When *mantras* (sound formulas used in meditation) or divine ideas are meditated upon, certain images are brought out. It is something like liquid crystallizing into solid form. These geometric figures are actual crystallized *mantra* forms. A *yantra* is a physical expression of a *mantram*—*mantram* being a divine aspect in the form of sound vibration and *yantra* in the form of a geometrical figure.

In simple language, as I said before, our Integral Yoga *Yantra* represents the entire creation. Each part of the *yantra* corresponds to a different aspect of the Cosmos. According to yogic thinking, God,



the Cosmic Consciousness, is originally unmanifest—just by Himself or Herself. As God begins to manifest, the first expression is as the sound vibration. The Bible explains it by saying, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Here, “Word” means sound.

In Sanskrit they say something similar, but they take it a step further: *nada*, *bindhu*, *kalaa*: the sound, then the dot, then the art or rays. If God manifests as sound, you can’t see anything. What is the smallest expression that you could see? The *bindhu*, or dot. It should be the smallest possible particle. But, of course, if it is that small, we can’t see it, so in the *yantra*, it is shown as a large dot in the very center. The *bindhu* represents the first physical expression, the very core of the cosmos. It is that dot that then expresses as *kalaa*. *Kalaa* means the different aspects or, literally, the different rays or different arts.

The next expressions are the three rings of different hues surrounding the *bindhu*. They represent the three *gunas*, or basic qualities of nature: *sattva* (balance), *rajas* (activity) and *tamas* (inertia). In the yogic thinking, everything in this universe manifests uniquely because it results from a unique combination of these three qualities. All differences in the phenomenal world are due to the variations of these three basic qualities.

Then, you see the hexagon around the three rings. This can be very well explained with an example from science. If you take a photograph of a crystal, you will see that its normal shape is six-sided. That’s why the *yantra* has the six triangles around the center. It means that the first speck of matter expresses itself as more complex matter, like a crystal.

The six triangles are actually a combination of two larger triangles, one pointing down, the other up. As one triangle passes through the other, we get this six-sided figure. The triangle with the apex upward represents the positive, or masculine aspect; the inverted triangle is the negative, or feminine aspect. In Sanskrit this concept is called *Siva-Shakti*. It is a combination of the male and female, equally represented. There is no inferiority or superiority with respect to either aspect; they blend perfectly together. Whichever way you turn the *yantra*, they remain the same. So, it makes a complete whole, and this, itself, represents the entire *nirguna* (unmanifest) as well as *saguna* (manifest) aspects of the Supreme.

Once the triangles come together, the hexagon could then represent something else also: the six basic *tattvas*, or principles: the five senses and the mind as the sixth sense. The six-sided crystal then manifests outward in further expansions of the primordial energy and matter. Why and how does this happen? Out of love. So all the beautiful lotus petals represent the loving manifestation.

Another way of explaining the petals is that the eight inner petals represent the subtle elements, while the sixteen outer ones indicate their grosser manifestations.

Finally, you see the three large circles surrounding the lotuses. They indicate how these elements further express as the three worlds: causal, astral and physical. But even that is not the end. The Divine expression is unlimited. That is why the circles are framed by a square with gaps pointing outward, representing the infinity of creation.

*A yantra is a mystic symbol in the form of a geometric diagram. Those who went into deep meditation experienced something in the unconscious levels of the mind. Upon returning to normal consciousness, they expressed what they had experienced in the form of mantrams, or mystic sounds, and yantras.*

—Sri Gurudev

The construction of the LOTUS was completed in 1986. On its honorary advisory council sat thirty-nine members, among whom were religious dignitaries from the major world religions, including the Venerable Prabhava Dharma of the International Zen Institute of America, the representative of H. H. the Dalai Lama; international businessmen, including Dr. Hari Harilela of Hong Kong and Dr. N. Mahalingam of India; and statesmen from the United Nations, including Dr. Robert Muller, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations, and Sri C. V. Narasimhan, former Under Secretary-General of the United Nations.

On July 19, 1986, the Grand Opening and Dedication of the LOTUS began with the World Faiths Symposium in Charlottesville, Virginia, where a panel of thirty-three distinguished representatives from the world religions and from various religious organizations addressed an audience of fifteen hundred people on the theme: *Truth is One, Paths are Many*. Performers from various cultural and religious backgrounds presented traditional sacred dance and music, and such well-known performing artists as Carole King and Paul Winter performed their works.

The following day, three thousand people gathered at the LOTUS to witness the dedication. Twelve celebrants representing the world religions performed an ecumenical worship service, after which they proceeded to the Shrine to observe the illumination of the central column of light and the altars and to participate in a ribbon cutting ceremony. During the ceremonies Sri Gurudev blessed the Shrine by performing a unique ritual: flying in a helicopter above the LOTUS, he poured holy water all over the Shrine. The celebration continued on through the day and evening, concluding with a splendid fireworks display.

Since then, thousands of guests from all over the world have visited the LOTUS including groups from religious organizations and communities, senior citizen clubs and schools, from elementary schools to universities. Just as Gurudev had envisioned it, the LOTUS stands as an inspiring, silent testimony to the underlying unity of all faiths.

"As all men are alike  
(tho' infinitely various),  
So all Religions, & as all similars,  
have one source."  
—William Blake



*Interfaith service performed during the LOTUS dedication in July 1986*

## DOWN-TO-EARTH PHILOSOPHY

It was February 1986 when my wife, Subhadra, and I put our belongings in storage and got ready to make a trial move from Santa Barbara, California, to Yogaville, Virginia, in order to offer our service for the completion and grand opening of the LOTUS and, also, to see if we wanted to move permanently to Yogaville.

Not long after we arrived, Brother Janardhana asked me to assist him with one of the first jobs that I was asked to do at the Shrine: to help him spray paint the inside alcoves where the altars were to be placed. Janardhana told me that the alcoves were to be painted to resemble lotus petals. Having a background in art, I thought that this would be a pretty "cool" job—which it was. However, the lessons that I would *begin* to learn at the ashram were lessons that I continue to learn to this day, more than ten years later. These lessons are twofold. First: how to remain peaceful and to express perfection in action under the pressure of problems that arise. Second: how to remain unattached to the fruits of my labor.

Meanwhile, at the Shrine, we began taping and masking off each alcove so that there wouldn't be any over-spray on the finished wooden walls. We masked from the floor all the way up a precarious twenty-seven-foot scaffold to the tip of the alcoves. Dangling at the top, I soon began saying my mantra in earnest! Then came the actual praying. Janardhana showed me what he wanted then asked me to give it a go. All the while, I kept thinking: "Remember, this is the Shrine that my Holy Master saw in his meditations as a gift of Peace and Light to all beings." Soon, however, the pressure that I felt began to manifest. With my first shot, a big glob of paint squirted out and onto the wall. Janardhana calmly said, "Not bad for first try."

Well, to make a long story short, both Janardhana and I had continual problems with the sprayer gun, which constantly be-

came clogged and stopped up, while Gurudev, himself, occasionally watched from behind. Sometimes, it would take us an hour or two to take the sprayer apart, to clean it and, every so often, to get a new part, and then to put it back together, only to have it happen all over again a short time later. Add to that the pressure of knowing that the other crews were waiting for us to finish painting so that they could set in place the altar columns and the altars themselves. All this with many more critical tasks left to do and the grand opening only three months away.

Actually, looking back, I realize that this type of situation is normal in life; however, under the divine circumstances of building a sacred shrine, everything seemed more intense. In fact, when we finally finished, I felt proud and special to have been given the opportunity to participate in such an auspicious project. Yet, having recently discovered the yogic philosophy of non-attachment, I couldn't very well go around bragging about my accomplishment without feeling that I had mud on my face. Much to my surprise, however, this feeling did manifest as a physical reality a few days later.

After Janardhana and I had finished painting the alcoves, I happened to be in the parking lot of the Shrine, and I noticed that Gurudev's jeep was stuck in the mud—with Gurudev in it! Some of us enthusiastically gathered to serve our Guru personally. Again, I was feeling so proud and so special. Well, as soon as we began pushing and rocking Gurudev's jeep, he began to give it more gas, and the jeep sprayed me with mud from head to toe, in much the same way that I had sprayed the Shrine's alcoves from top to bottom. Then the jeep grabbed dry ground, and Gurudev drove away without even looking back. There I stood, covered from head to toe in mud. Gurudev had just shown me, literally, that it is not our ego that does things, but, rather, it is the Divine Force, or God that permeates and works through all of His creation. With that realization, I simply walked away, savoring my first Yogaville





*Sri Gurudev and Rev. Arjuna Jyothi discussing the design of the first LOTUS flag*

lesson in non-attachment. And Subhadra and I soon decided to make Yogaville our permanent home. —Rev. Arjuna Jyothi

### **EVERYTHING SHOULD BE SYMMETRICAL**

One day, I was working in the basement, bending some pipe, when Gurudev came in. He stood back, folded his arms, looked at what I was doing, and said, "Hmm." I asked, "What's wrong?" And he replied, "This pipe that you are running is not symmetrical with the pipe beside it."

Of course, I had what I thought was a good reason. The area had been so full of obstacles that I, literally, had to bend around things, and it was quite difficult for me. So I explained to Gurudev: "Well, I was having problems getting around all these things, and I figured it's just in the basement; no one is going to see it, anyway." He looked at me, and he said, "I don't care if it is in a ditch. Everything should be symmetrical."

*Everything should be symmetrical.* That is a little statement that has stuck with me all through the years. And, since that time,

when I am doing my work and I get from others the same type of question that I had asked Gurudev—Why are you doing it? No one is going to see it. Why are you being so fussy?—I always say the same thing: "I don't care if it is in a ditch. It has got to be symmetrical!" —Bob Slavet

### **GETTING IN TOUCH WITH OUR INNER LOTUS**

One of the real miracles of living at Yogaville is working with Sri Gurudev. I could say that in the many years of experience that I've had with him, it has been one phenomenon after the other and one miracle after the next. In a way, I feel as though I have learned as much by what he has done working with me as I have in anything else. To work with him is to see his joy in action. He loves to do things. He is totally enamored of every detail. That is one of the things that really impressed me and what I've imbibed somewhat in my own life: to really think about the best way to do each thing.

However, I recall that, in the beginning, Gurudev's attention to detail used to ex-

erate me. For example, once, at the Connecticut ashram, we were working together in a golf cart, and he was insisting that the tires that were underneath the vehicle—tires that no one would ever see—be attached in such a way that they looked as though the vehicle had been manufactured with them that way. Also, he

wanted exactly the right type of clips and everything. At one point, I said to him, “But, look, what does it matter? No one is ever even going to see that.” And he replied, “It doesn’t matter whether they see it or they don’t see it. Everything should be done beautifully. How about in you? Just because someone doesn’t see everything in you, should not all be nice and clean?”

At that point, I realized that it is all an analogy, that all that Gurudev does and all the work that he performs with us on the outer planes is really an analogy for the real work that he is helping us to do on our inner planes. In a way, even the manifestation of LOTUS serves to help us to discover our own inner LOTUS.

Moreover, through Gurudev’s guidance, I also came to see the importance of detail and to realize that the beauty and success of any project are expressed in its many details. To have excellence, you have to work with details. And of that Gurudev is the master: every little detail; every little point on the shrine; every little moment. He would always ask, “Which is the best way to do it? Is this a better way? Is that a better way? Which way is the most efficient? Which is the most useful? Which is the most lasting?”

And I’ll offer another analogy, one that I will never forget for as long as I live.

Once, when I was working with Swamiji, I was driving him around in an old car, and the radiator was leaking. In fact, we had to keep a jug of water with us, and we had to stop a couple of times to refill the

radiator. I remember having taken a big, five-gallon jug of water, and, at one point, I was holding it and pouring the water into the radiator. Gurudev asked, “What are you doing that for? Just lean it against the car, tip it and pour the water in. You don’t have to be

lifting it and holding it.” That little incident, alone, showed me his brilliance.

For it isn’t only what is happening, but how it is happening. What kind of energy are you putting into it? Is it the most easeful way of accomplishing that final goal?

In connection with LOTUS, I had never done any kind of work with plumbing or household electrical work. I had done automotive electric work and had worked on automobile water hoses. But, somehow, Gurudev trains us by giving us particular jobs to perform, really pushing us beyond what any of us would have dreamed were our limits, beyond what we imagined we could ever manifest. So this particular time, he said to me, “Okay. You just do this fountain job; and if you have any problems, you just ask me, and I’ll help you with it.

Frankly, I was very reluctant even to take on the job. It was a mammoth job. But, somehow, I agreed, thinking, “I can always ask him.” So, I started the undertaking. And it was a gigantic undertaking. Actually, we had to work the entire winter, beginning in November 1985 and ending in February 1986, and I recall that much of the time it was raining. We had to walk back and forth through the mud in the lake a million times, going in and out, our feet getting cold and wet. We really had to get the lake drained, because we had already sent out the invitations for the LOTUS opening, which was to be in July of 1986, and we were afraid that the lake would not be filled by the time of the dedication. So we had to work through the winter.

We constructed a huge cement edifice that held the submersible pump. And I had to

do so much research: What type of pump? What type of valves? It was not a simple system at all, because we were also using the water to irrigate the entire Shrine landscaping system, as well as for the fire hydrants. It had to have electronic valves, and we also had to install a lighting system, so we had to have special wires coming out and all through the conduit. What's more, we had to take into consideration that if the lake were to be drained, how the whole system could be drained so that the pipes wouldn't freeze.

Almost every time, in every area that I worked on, I went over the details with Gurudev. I would say, "This is what I think" and "Does this seem right to You?" Actually, Gurudev helped quite a lot in forming and designing the whole project. I don't think I've ever done a project that was so difficult, and my guess is that I probably won't ever again have to do one as difficult. In all truth, it was sheer *tapasya* (burning, purification).

On the morning that we actually installed the pump, it was ten degrees. We had a crew of about eight people with winches and come-alongs. It was one of the rare moments when the lake had to be frozen, because we had to drive onto it. If it were not frozen at the bottom, then the truck would get stuck in the mud. We had to do it when it was that cold. So, we drove out there. I remember winching this three hundred- to four hundred-pound pump—a ten-horse power pump—with special brackets that we had made in order to be able to raise it into position. We winched it all into place. I had to take off my gloves in order to be able to put in the bolts that would hold the whole mechanism in place. My hands were so cold and numb that I could hardly even feel the bolts in my hand. But, anyway, we got it in place.

Somehow, through all of this miracle, I

learned household plumbing and major household electrical work with 220 volts, how to wire with relays and switch controls, how to waterproof boxes under the lake, and how to ground fault systems, safety systems

That was the miracle of being with Gurudev. You started out as raw material. And by presenting you with a project like this one that I've described, Gurudev gave you the opportunity to learn every single discipline, both of

the physical and spiritual planes.

You learned how to control your mind and how to endure difficult situations. You learned how to ask people questions and how to find out information. You learned how to get along with people in very trying situations. How to encourage people to help you, people who were volunteers, not even being paid. How to keep these individuals happy and motivated and even joyful in very stressful situations. And how to laugh when we made mistakes and how to use these mistakes as stepping stones to greater success.

Moreover, I would say that in my everyday life now, all of the skills that I learned from living at Yogaville for nineteen years come in handy. I would say that living in Yogaville is the best possible preparation for life. For it gives you the ability to be happy in all situations. After going through some arduous situations, you learn to be happy in the midst of them. It is not that life is all smooth and easy. It is how to surmount and how to be blissful amidst life's very difficult periods. How even to be blissful when the mind is disturbed—not just when the mind is peaceful. How to be happy even when the mind is going through its seasons.

So, I am eternally grateful to Swami Gurudev for the experiences that I have had and for the honor and blessing that I have had to be an instrument in such a noble undertaking as the Light Of Truth Universal Shrine. —Swami Swaroopananda



with the completion and dedication of LOTUS, Sri Gurudev began to focus his attention on the development of Yogaville. Inspired and enthusiastic, Yogaville community members organized a benefit luncheon entitled "Let's Build Yogaville. The event was held on April 1987, in nearby Charlottesville, and many people came to enjoy a festive meal with Sri Gurudev and, at the same time, to express their support for the growth and future of Yogaville. During the event, Sri Gurudev spoke about his vision of Yogaville, about the quality of life that would be available to those interested in becoming part of the community, and, of course, about LOTUS.

## LET'S BUILD YOGAVILLE

Let me say a few words, because words should be few; actions should be many. When we talk too much, we don't act much. Talk less, act more. In a way, that's what we're trying to do, and we are doing it.

First of all, let me thank you all for coming forward to keep on lending your hand, extending your hand in making this Yogaville a real "heaven on earth." It is heaven. Often, when I travel, people say to me, "We can easily recognize your kids." That's what they say. So I ask them, "How?" and they reply, "There seems to be something special in their faces. I can immediately say, 'Here is an IYIer.'"

Yes, we are all becoming members of the beautiful family. I am very regular in watching the world news. And the more I watch, the more I see about how the world is going, and the more I feel the need for many, many Yogavilles. If we just let the world go along as it is, there's no hope. Things are rotten everywhere. Americans cannot be proud. In every area, we are put to shame as Americans, individually and na-

tionally. Everywhere. It's very painful to watch what's going on. Nobody is spared, from the little child to the topmost political person. So where is the hope for us? How can we save ourselves and the world?

**Peace begins with you. Help begins with you. Everything begins with you.**

I say that charity begins at home. Peace begins with you. Help begins with you. Everything begins with you. That is the very reason why we are a small group; we are not really a big group compared to many of the other communities. But, if we can

really open our hearts and souls and work hard, we can certainly make this possible. We all have our own imagination of how a heaven would be—and should be. How we all want to be happy, healthy, and wealthy. Sure. Health, happiness, wealth, they all go together. That's what good living means: virtuous living, peaceful living, harmonious living, healthy living, without the need for a doctor, a policeman, prisons. Mahatma Gandhi used to call this type of environment the "Kingdom of Ram."

Here, at Yogaville, we are trying to build a Kingdom of Yoga, Yogaville. We are humble in calling it a *ville*, or village, but it should be a Yoga kingdom. And it's not impossible. At the same time, it's not easy. Anything worthwhile takes a lot of effort. Small things can be done easily. We can reap the benefit the very next day, but those things don't stay long. If we want a long-term benefit, an enduring one, one that will be ever with us, it takes a long time. But we can do it. And, in a way, we are doing it, and we should continue to do it. So, let us remember that. Yogaville is not just buildings. You have seen the new projects: Sivananda Hall, the dormitory, the monastery, the clinic and recreation facility. But, remember, buildings alone will not make Yogaville. In fact, there are many better places with better buildings. People. People are more important. Build the people, and the buildings will



*Portraits of saints and sages are displayed in Yogaville's Sivananda Hall.*

come by themselves.

Every individual should be a shining example of Yoga, a shining example of what selfless service means. If the people are there, they must have zeal, without which we cannot build a community. Many communities have failed. You know that already. So far, we have not failed. We are growing. It's really surprising. It wouldn't have been surprising if long before, we had packed our things and had gone away. Twenty years have passed. We are still together. Though we have our little problems, we are still together. And even though we have our little problems, there is some mischievous force behind it. I don't know what it is.

Our goal should be great. And our goal, to build Yogaville, is a very, very difficult one. For Yogaville is not just simply a bunch of people coming together, living together, and then going away. No. Rather, Yogaville should set a beautiful example for the whole world. One day, the whole world will visit you. They should come to see that there is a heaven on the earth. And the one and only rule, the one and only word that always came to my mind was this: *dedication*. And what do you dedicate? You dedicate your-

self completely at the altar of Yogaville. And that's what you call *sacrifice*. Sacrifice means chopping off your head at the feet of God. Here, we are chopping off our ego, our egoistic head. Here, we want quality, certainly not quantity. So, when we gather in the name of building Yogaville, my request is that you build yourselves as good yogis, making sure that you feel that you are just part of the whole family here. That's really a small area. Don't think, "Oh, I'm part of the whole world. That's too much to handle now." Every one of you should feel that you are part of this family, the Yogaville family, and that "I'm living for the sake of the family. I'm living to make this Yogaville family a successful one. That's my goal."

Think that way. Sit and meditate; practice this and that. Even those practices should not be just for yourself, but for the sake of the entire Yogaville. Anything and everything that could make Yogaville a success should be done by you. So, brush aside all your petty little demands and commands and egos. Know that you are here living for Yogaville. That's my request: to make Yogaville a success. Think that way, giving yourself completely. Surrender yourself



*Sri Gurudev guides the construction team in erecting the LOTUS arch.*

is. I'm reminded of John F. Kennedy's words: "Please don't ask what the country can do for you. Instead, ask what you can do for the country."

Our country is Yogaville. And every one of you should question yourself, "What should

I do to make this community a success?" Don't ask, "What can Yogaville do for me?" Yogaville will do nothing for you, unless you put yourself, one hundred percent, in the hands of Yogaville. Live for that sake. Put aside your individual little self. Always think,



*The first expert welder in Tamil Nadu, India, Sri Gurudev exhibits his skill at the Yogaville Service Center.*



"Yogaville, Yogaville, Yogaville." Dream about it. Every minute, your thought should be: "What can I do for Yogaville?" In fact, this gathering should be a good opportunity for us to renew that dedication and to reevaluate our individual selves. Ask: How much am I doing? How much more can I give? How reluctant am I to give? How can I improve? What should I do more? Take this time to think of that. If you have any negative feeling about anybody, think of it now. By this evening, it should be taken out of your heart. No nastiness, no negativity, no dislikes.

Remember, we are all cells of the same body, which we call Yogaville. Even if one cell gets contaminated, it will ruin the entire body. So, make your thought into that kind of beautiful, fit cell that is part of the Yogaville body. Money will come; buildings will come. Look at this; we had to come all the way to Charlottesville. You could have had the event there. It's not for the money. No. I don't worry about money. Money comes. Money should come, asking you, begging you, "Come on, come on; I am here. Take me. Make use of me." I believe in that. If your goal is great and if your dedication, your sacrifice with respect to that goal is real, then every facility will come to you.

Don't think of the dollar. That's your slave. It will come after you. Put the goal forward; march forward. All the rest will be added unto you. We have a good example in building LOTUS. Without a penny in the hand, we started LOTUS. At Yogaville here and even at the Connecticut Yogaville. I still remember vividly when, some eighteen years back in New York, on the instruction of a well-known fundraiser, I spent about \$800. Not even a dollar did we get afterwards. We couldn't even get the money to pay the bill. I didn't believe in those things. Forget about all that fund-raising.

**"How much am I doing? How much more can I give? How reluctant am I to give? How can I improve?"**

How did we get the Connecticut Yogaville? How did we get this one? How did we build LOTUS? Where did it come from? That means that we should have a goal not to fulfill our little ego, but to work for the welfare of the entire humanity. The goal should be that broad.

Keep that goal in mind. Simply go to sleep, think of it every day, and all the necessary things will come to you automatically. You don't even have to go and ask for it, because we have picked out a goal that is dear to God. It is the business of God to take care of that. You don't even have to say to God, "God, I have a goal. Please fulfill it. I'm

ready to do my part." God helps those who help themselves. So don't look for God's help. You help yourself. By putting the goal forward, by living and dying around dreaming and doing everything in that name, Yogaville will naturally manifest. God will send all the necessities: money, people, facilities, opportunities. By building Yogavillians, we are building Yogaville. But don't become Yogavillains. Then, there will be no Yogaville. I want everyone to excel. Everybody should be known for something great. No one inferior. Thank you.

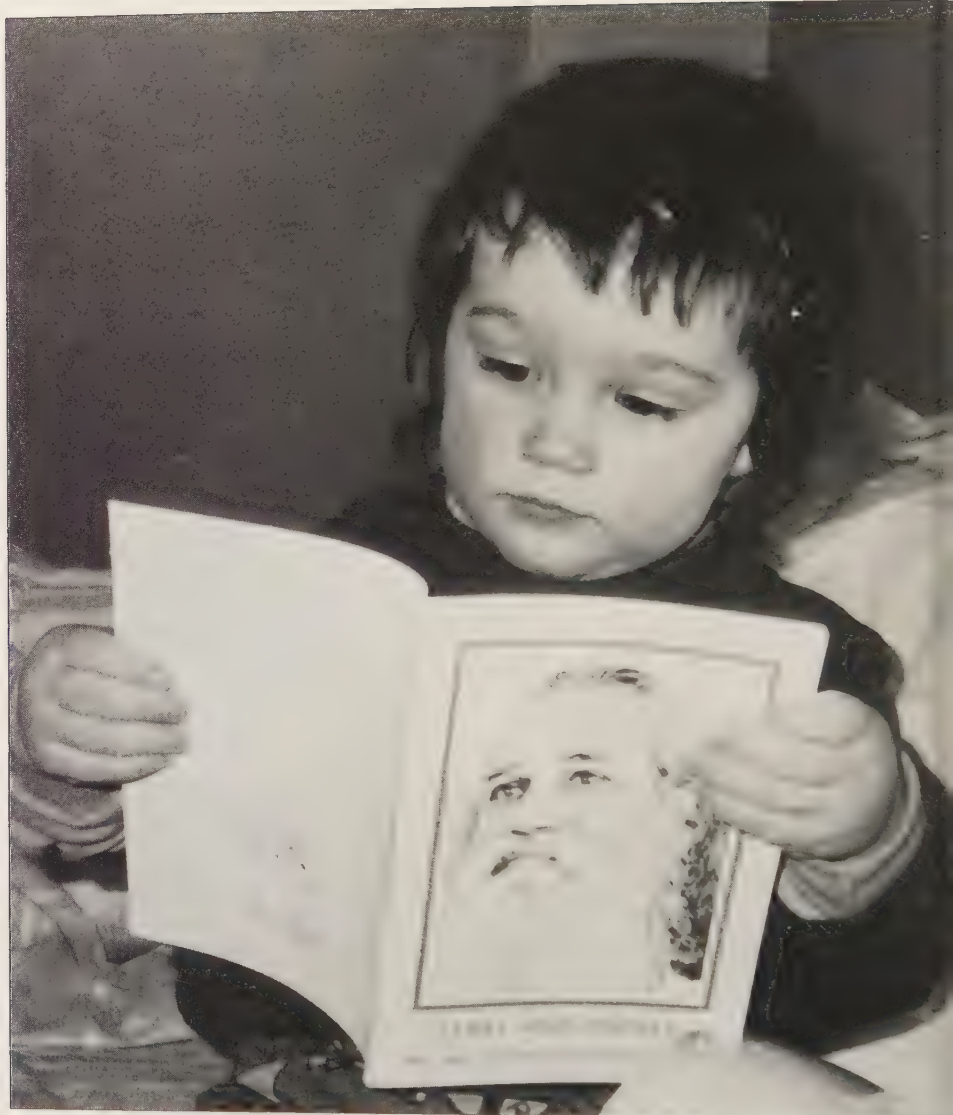
*"Yogaville is an abode of perfect dedication. . . is an aspiration to express the True Self. . . is an embrace to all nations, cultures and creeds. . . is a community expressing the unity in diversity through a life of purity and serenity. . . is a model world of health and harmony, peace and prosperity. . . is a spiritual center for study, research and growth. . . belongs to all who believe in the precepts and life-style of Integral Yoga and affirm to follow them. Let us work together, talk together, live together, love together." —Sri Gurudev*



*Sri Gurudev on stage with Yogaville Fine Arts Society principal dance instructor Padma Rasiah and her students after a recital*



*Sri Gurudev joins the Yogaville Summer Program for Children campers and staff for a group photo.*



*An ardent devotee practicing svadhyaya, the study of spiritual books!*

### **SASTRI: A MASTER INDEXING PROJECT FINDS ITS WAY TO THE ASHRAM LIBRARY**

No one knows exactly when it was, but approximately eight or nine thousand years ago, someone came up with the idea of recording information in written form. Probably, that person had felt the urgent need to keep track of how many sheep he had sold to his neighbor or how many

children she had begat (there was a lot of begatting in those days!).

Then, some five hundred years ago a very clever fellow named Guttenberg invented printing, which soon became the state of the art that was to replace all those handwritten records. By then, humanity had developed a variety of scriptures, philosophies, sciences, and other high-minded ventures, but, generally, most people kept accounts of how many sheep they had sold or how many



children they had begat, and so forth.

After some time, many records of various types were accumulated in the world. A large quantity of information had been generated, and a problem arose as to how to retrieve specific information from the massive volume of data. Eventually, various systems of library indexing were developed, but no system was able to offer the users complete or adequate access to the vast pool of knowledge. As a result, much of the information, stored in many places, remained out of reach to most people.

This dilemma existed thirty years ago when Sri Gurudev came to the United States to serve and to share his wisdom. From the very beginning of his service here, people began to record Gurudev's words. And, this chronicle of wisdom has been accumulating ever since. As you can imagine, we encountered the challenge of accessing this vast store of wisdom for specific topics. For knowledge is not usable if it is not accessible.

During his thirty years of service in the West, Sri Gurudev has given thousands of

talks, and, up to now, there has been no way to access specific information from these talks. What's more, mounds and mounds of paper have been generated from the transcripts of what Gurudev has said. Thus, the idea of a computerized index came to my mind.

I'm happy to report now that, using current technology for information storage and retrieval, we have undertaken this project. We are utilizing a software program that we have designed for our specific needs; and, so far, we have entered and indexed one hundred seventy-five *satsangs* onto the computer (approximately nine years worth of *satsang* talks).

The intent of this project is to serve, not just Yogaville community members, but our entire international community. I have spoken with many people, all of whom enthusiastically support this venture, which is a life-time undertaking that will serve everyone for generations to come. We plan to put **all** of Gurudev's printed words into an electronic format that will be totally and instantaneously accessible. Additionally, this pro-



*Inside Vidya Bhavan, Yogaville's library*

gram may be used in relation to the publication of books and the Integral Yoga magazine, by the Programs Department, and as a reference source for teachers and speakers. We intend to make all of this material available on the Internet. We are also working on constructing a web page. The next step will be to obtain the web publishing software and to connect to a provider. Another objective is to publish volumes of the works on CD-ROM, for which software is also available.

Once these objectives are realized, you will be able to locate every talk that Gurudev has given (as well as all *Integral Yoga* magazines and books, possibly including foreign translations) on any subject and in any combination of subjects. If, for example, you wanted to find all those talks where Gurudev speaks about love and raising children, you would be able to do so. The computer can index according to date, location and subject, along with any combination of search parameters that you may require. It can accomplish Boolean searches, "fuzzy searches," multiple field searches; additionally, the computer can determine the exact number of times that any word or phrase was used in all talks ever given—and much more! Documents that can be read by any platform may be copied to disk (MAC or DOS). What's more, anyone with a modem can dial into the system, calling up those documents that include the subjects he or she may be interested in researching and instantly downloading the desired information. A future plan includes the ability to retrieve all articles about Gurudev, the Ashram, and LOTUS that have been written in magazines, newspapers, etc.

If you would like to participate in and support this project in any way, please contact Swami Murugananda at the Ashram.

By the way, the name of this project, SASTRI, is an acronym that stands for "Satchidananda Automated System for Teachings Retrieval and Indexing.

Om Shanthi. —Swami Murugananda

*"Yogaville is not only buildings. You have seen the new projects: Sivananda Hall, the dormitory, the monastery, the clinic and recreation facility. But, remember, buildings alone will not make Yogaville. In fact, there are many better places with better buildings. People. People are more important. Build the people, and the buildings will come by themselves". —Sri Gurudev*

## TO SRI GURUDEV

Beloved Master, most loving and respectful greetings!

Some years ago, you were asked how a devotee could thank you for all your years of service. Your response was: "Apply what you have learned to your own lives. Become peaceful and happy. That is the best thank that you could give me."

Throughout the world, many have done as you advised. That is, your children have taken the great teachings of Yoga and have applied them in all fields: nursing, teaching, the space program, community food cooperatives, government services, the arts, computer sciences, and much more. Moreover, hundreds have been and continue to be trained, to teach and to share the Integral Yoga approach to *Hatha Yoga*, *Raja Yoga*, *pranayama* and meditation. We are grateful that you have entrusted these great teachings to us, but we know that we are just your instruments, that it is you working through us that makes it possible for students to have meaningful inner experiences. You are, and always will be, the Heart of these Integral Yoga teachings. We are simply your messengers, your limbs and appendages.

Your words have inspired us over the thirty years that you have served in the West, but it is your actions that have moved us to change and grow. We see in you such exemplary qualities as wisdom, patience, surrender, unconditional love, discipline, humility and selfless service. You are the embodiment of Integral Yoga. And you have taught us that we, too, can experience a life



*Sri Gurudev's students as teachers*



of Peace and Joy, Love and Light.

Yes, our growth has been slow, but your patience is unwavering. Before you could teach us *asanas*, *pranayama* and meditation, you had to show us how to make our beds, keep our surroundings clean, and how to get to appointments on time. In addition to being our Guru, you have often been both a mother and father to us. And when we look at you, we see the embodiment of H. H. The Reverend Sri Swami Sivanandaji's five essential teachings: Give, Love, Serve, Meditate, Realize. For you give of yourself tirelessly, day after day. You treat everyone and everything with Love. It was love that brought you to us, and it is Love that gives you the patience to stay and guide us. It is you whom Thiruvalluvar describes in the following words: "...as to those who love, they will give their very bones for helping others."

Gurudev, not only have you taught us how to give and how to love, but through your example, we have learned what it means to Serve. We have watched you serve



through public speaking, teaching classes, training disciples, participating in community events, in ecumenical services, in teaching centers and ashrams, on committees, and in the lives of the thousands who seek your guidance. We try to imitate you, but we haven't yet found the secret that enables us to keep up with you. Could it be that it is possible for you to serve as you do because you meditate not just while sitting in front of the altar, but wherever you may be? Have you, then, made the whole world your altar? It is by your example that we come to understand the phrase, "Meditation in Action."

While it's true that what you have realized, we do not know at present. But we can get a glimpse simply by looking into your eyes or stepping into the Light Of Truth Universal Shrine. In fact, you and the LOTUS are great beacons of Light, guiding those of us who are tossed about on the waves of life, seeking to bring our boats home.

Thank you, beloved Master, for the example that you set for all of us. Like you, we will not stop until the goal has been reached. Perhaps, someday, you will look at us and experience the sea of joy and gratitude that master Sivanandaji must feel when he gazes upon you. —*Maji Sollecito*

## IN PRAISE OF HIS GLORY

I often think about all the graces and blessings that our beloved Gurudev has showered on us all these thirty years of his service in the United States. It makes me deeply aware of how precious is every word, every teaching, every example of living Truth, Universal Love and Surrender. Gurudev's life manifests fully in God's hands. His life and words make the invisible, divine teachings visible to us all.

I know, yet not fully, how much my own life, over the past twenty-five years,

**...what most impressed me was his universal, unchanging, selfless love—for everyone.**

has been transformed by the Guru's Grace and through the practices. Actually, by some wondrous blessing, it even began much earlier. I have been guided and protected from the time I was ten years old since August 10, 1939, by a Beloved Person

son who appeared to me. His face was radiant, peaceful, and loving, and his eyes seemed to see through to my very soul. This beloved face was always with me, inspiring me with great devotion

and dedication to God all through my teens and my many years as a Sister. Yet, I did not know who he was!

I first heard about Sri Gurudev Swami Satchidanandaji in 1969 from a dear friend who attended the Friday night talks at the Universalist Church in New York City. I was living in the middle of America in those days, but I felt immediately responsive to my friend's sharing. Two years later, in 1971, I was able to attend, with my mother and another Sister friend, the Ten-Day Ecumenical Retreat at Annhurst, Connecticut, which was organized by Sri Gurudev. It was there that I saw Sri Gurudev for the first time, and I discovered, thirty-two years after I had first seen him, the identity of the Beloved Person whom I had seen all my life. You cannot imagine my joy, my surprise, my love and my gratitude! It all expressed itself in one spontaneous experience of surrender when I saw my "living Guru" face to face for the first time. This treasured feeling of faith, loving gratitude and openness renewed each time that I am in his presence. For I know in my heart that all that I am and ever will be is all his grace and doing.

When I first heard Sri Gurudev's teachings and watched him during those ten days I think what most impressed me was his universal, unchanging, selfless love—for everyone. His truly ecumenical understanding and respect for all approaches to God

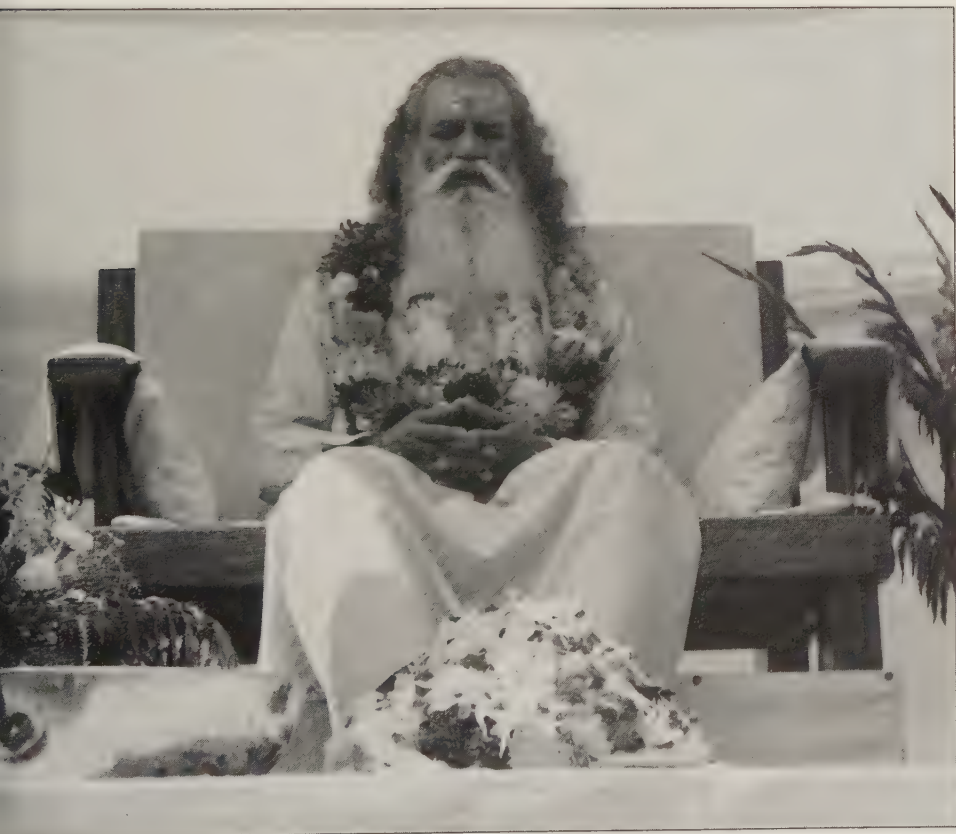
ve and worship while still honoring one's individual practice was very meaningful to me. Truthfully, though, it wasn't any one aspect of his teachings: it was the living teaching, himself, that made the difference. I saw, and still see, in him all the divine qualities that I yearn to experience. I saw, and see, that it is possible! When I realized that would open the way for these qualities to develop and manifest in my own life, my faith in his word and example alone drew me to his feet!

Then, the precious graces of *mantra* initiation, *pre-sannyas* and *sannyas* followed. I am still overwhelmed by the power of these gifts in my life and the beauty of renunciation to one's Guru. I pray that the faith and joyful love in this surrender will utterly transform my life, allowing it to be

an easeful, peaceful, useful instrument in His hands.

Nothing said could ever adequately thank God enough for the gift of the Guru in our life. Yet, by recognizing the living teachings in our beloved Gurudev, we can try to absorb as much as possible into ourselves and "live it out." May our daily life mirror the Guru within as transparently and radiantly as possible. May this help to bring about Peace, Harmony, Happiness, Health and the good of all Creation.

Initiation and emulation are the highest praise when practiced from inner conviction and devotion. So, I ask you, beloved Gurudev, to allow my entire life to be lived with total faith in you, radiant love for you, and devoted service to you and to all. Ever at your Lotus Feet. —Swami Gurucharanananda



*We are ever at your Lotus Feet*



*Sri Gurudev being sworn in as an American citizen.*

*"I go wherever I can serve, wherever people want me. It is not wealth or fame that attracts me; it is your sincere hearts. Wherever I feel that sincerity, it is a joy to serve."*

*—Sri Gurudev*

*Sri Gurudev Swami Satchidanandaji became an American citizen on February 20, 1976, during the year that marked the two hundredth birthday of the United States. That evening Gurudev said:*

Thank you very much for making me one of you. But, really, it was only a matter of legality. Otherwise, I have been an American for the past ten years. Because, somehow, that is what I feel. When I go to Rome, I become a Roman. Wherever I go, I feel that I am one of that group. The reason is that I don't seem to belong to any country.

In 1966, when I came in, they all called me a hippie, because I was in the midst of hippies. And I was happy to be called a

hippie, because that is the only way we could establish proper communication. See, even the Supreme God, the Nameless, Formless God, even when He comes down to our level, He also has to take some name and form. Because unless you come to that level, you cannot communicate, you cannot even understand each other.

When a grown-up person wants to play with the children, he has to go down on all fours and crawl and talk their language. He may be a big philosopher, a man with so many letters after his name, but if he is going to use all his literacy with the children, they will get scared—they won't even come near him. So, he has to talk in their own language, crawl like them. Only then will there be proper communication.

So, as soon as I walked into this country, I felt that; and if you remember my talks, you remember that very often you heard me saying, "We Americans, we Americans," because when you are



America, you are an American.

A renunciate cannot limit himself to one place or caste or community or creed. If he limits himself, then what is it that he has renounced? He still has something to renounce. And this sort of renunciation is a requirement in understanding God. Because God has no limitations; He is unlimited. Even the term "He" is only for our convenience. God is neither He nor She nor It. No one knows. No individual can know Him. You know God only by becoming unlimited, by losing your individuality. But if you are limited, you can never know the Unlimited. That is why limited people limit the Unlimited and give different labels and fight among each other, saying, "This is my God, that is your God.

Mine is big, yours is small." My God, how many problems they create.

So, really to know God is to renounce all your limitations. This is the reason why you see in almost all the different religions—whatever be the country, caste or community—that all the God-men and God-women have renounced their narrowness. No real sage or saint or prophet has ever said, "I belong only to this country or to this caste or to this community and not to the other." It is we who limit them, because we are still limited by our own narrowness. Then we say, "Oh, Moses belongs to us. Jesus belongs to us. Buddha belongs to us. We limit them. But ask Moses and Jesus and Buddha: "To whom do you belong?" They would certainly say, "We belong to all." ■

*While this issue of Integral Yoga magazine highlights and commemorates the anniversary of Sri Gurudev's thirty years of service in the West, the reality is that no matter where Sri Gurudev may be residing at any given time, he is, unceasingly, serving devotees worldwide, seekers from all faiths, traditions and backgrounds, young and old, rich and poor. His service is never limited to one particular place or to one particular group of people. To Gurudev "East" and "West" are mere labels. In his unlimited point of view, all is One. Like the tree that naturally offers its fruit to one and all, no matter what station in life, Gurudev cannot do otherwise than share the divine wisdom that flows through his being with all those who seek his guidance on the journey toward **Satchidananda**: Existence, Knowledge, Bliss Absolute.*

***In Yoga there is no coming or going.***

***We are always one in the spirit.***

***—Sri Gurudev***

# Lord Nataraja: Vision of the Sacred Dance



*Lord Nataraja, in all his holy splendor, dancing His Cosmic Dance atop Yogaville's Kailash hill.*

*With the Omniscient dancing,  
the worlds tremble and shake;  
The Lord dances knowing  
the limits of our hearts;  
With the Omniscient dancing,  
the many elements are on the move;  
Deriving pleasure from the  
dance of the Holy Flame.*

*—Tirumantiram, 2722*

On Friday, 29 March, 1991, Lord Siva Nataraja took his place in a newly built glass shrine atop Yogaville's Kailash. So, this year we are not only commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of Sri Gurudev's service in the West and the tenth anniversary of LOTUS but we are also observing the fifth anniversary of the installation of the magnificent moorthi (statue) of Lord Nataraja, donated by

r. Karan and Princess Yasho Singh.

During the dedication ceremonies in 1991, Dr. Singh said, "In the *Treta Yuga*, Lord Nataraja danced in the Golden Hall of Chidambaram. And, now, in this *Kali Yuga*, he has agreed to dance in this Ashram of Yogaville."

Five years ago, those who witnessed the installation of Lord Nataraja's *moorthi* felt that Lord Nataraja truly danced in their hearts. Today, Lord Nataraja continues to inspire the many visitors who come to receive His blessings and to worship him as he dances his Cosmic Dance of Love and Light. ■

"Of the names of Siva, Nataraja, or the King of Dance, is most widely known . . . Siva, in his form as Nataraja, dances in the cosmos and dances as well in the Golden Hall of Chidambaram, the centre of the universe. Siva exists in two states, one transcending everything and the other in inseparable relation. Siva in his highest form exists as pure intelligence and is devoid of form, or *swarupa*. Motion is then caused. He is devoid of qualities and attributes—*nirguna*. When Siva stands in inseparable relation to souls and the universe of matter, that state is known as *saguna*. Motion is then caused. There is no motion either for Pure Intelligence of Pure Matter. While Siva can exist both independently and in inseparable relation with matter, the latter has no independent entity and can have motion only if Siva wills it.

Between Para Sivam and Pati Siva, that is, Pure Intelligence and Nataraja, is Sivakami, the Spouse of the Lord, who is the connecting link. Sivakami is none else but Mother Nature. The form of Nataraja is but an exposition of the motion caused by Pure Intelligence when in contact with matter.

The venue of Nataraja's dance is not restricted only to Chidambaram. For that matter, as Tirumular says, 'Everywhere is Chidambaram.' The dance that Nataraja executes in Chidambaram is the *Ananda Tandavan*, the Dance of Delight, or the *Nadanta Nattam*, the Dance of Rhythm. It is an integrated dance, combining in itself the five dances undertaken by Siva as the Supreme God in pursuance of His five activities of creation, preservation, destruction, concealment and grace. . ."

—K. C. Kamaliah, *Vision of the Sacred*



Dr. Gurudev with Dr. Karan Singh during the dedication of Lord Nataraja's shrine, March 1991





# *Dedicated to Beloved Sri Gurudev and His Vision of Yogaville*

*You are pink and gold*

*In the dawn light*

*Filtering through the mist*

*Of maya*

*You are peace*

*In the silent eventide*

*rising up from still fields*

*And the passing river*

*You are the embrace of tree*

*Strong and tall*

*Comforting me*

*Lonely, lonely, lonely*

*Only for God*

*You are the echo of dim whispers*

*Of my soul*

*Bouncing off the empty*

*Canyon wall*

*Calling always to*

*The highest goal*

*You are Light of Lights*

*My All in All*

*—Rev. Subhadra Jyothi*





# LOTUS Prayer

*O Lord, the Light of Lights,  
You are the Indweller of the entire Universe.  
You are the Light of Awareness.  
You are the Light of our Consciousness.  
You are the One who enlightens everything and everybody.  
You are the One who makes the sun shine,  
the moon shine, who makes the stars shine, who makes the fire burn.  
Kindly lead us to that Light of Wisdom and remove  
the darkness of ignorance; enlighten our hearts.  
Help us experience that Light within and without.  
Help us see the same Light, the same Spirit dwelling  
everywhere in everything or, to be more accurate, as everything.  
Help us to understand You and You alone through  
all these various forms and names, through all  
these different approaches and ways of worship.  
Help us recognize the central unity.  
Help us realize we are Your image, Your children,  
no matter what the differences are.  
Let us behold Your Spirit running through all.  
Give us the strength and courage and capacity to  
experience that Peace and Joy within and share  
the same with everyone.*

*Help us get away from these selfish temptations  
with which we are creating all the differences,  
all the fights, and all the wars.  
We have suffered enough due to our ignorance.  
Please guide us to know our brothers and sisters  
and to know we are all parts of Your family.  
Enlighten our paths, O Light of Lights,  
Lord of Lords, Help us; guide us.*

*—Sri Swami Satchidananda*

# *In Memorium*

## *Tribute to Swami Vimalananda Mataji*

*by Srimati Rukmini Rasiah*

**MATAJI, ARE YOU LAUGHING  
AWAY WHEREEVER YOU MAY BE?**

*Why worry? Laugh away your cares. Everything has been planned long ago. Be Happy, be Merry, have Fun! Life is just a dream!*

The above words were uttered by Swami Vimalananda Mataji to the many who went to her for advice and solace, and these words were followed by her unforgettable, spontaneous, soothing laughter.

In the beginning, there were a few who could not understand Mataji's "cure by laughter." "She is treating us like babies," they would complain. However, the very next day, they would go back to her and, before long, join in the refrain.

Mataji's childlike nature, the sincerity of her belief, and her uplifting laughter gave solace to all who went to her. It was very easy to learn from Mataji. She was understanding, gentle and loving. She was my Guru who taught Tamil and Hinduism.

Mataji's deep devotion to her Guru was a lesson to everyone. To cite just one example: Mataji visited Yogaville for the opening of LOTUS. Arriving some time during the day, after a tiring journey, she refrained from taking food until she paid homage to her Guruji at *satsang* late in the evening.

Mataji hailed from a distinguished family in Trincomalee, Sri Lanka. Her family members are well known for their philanthropy and devoted service in religious and educational activities. Her elder sister,

Swami Sivananda Satchidananda Mataji was initiated into the Holy Order of Sannyas by H. H. Sri Swami Sivananda Saraswathi in Rishikesh. At her earnest request, Sivanandaji sent Sri Swami Satchidananda with her to Sri Lanka to open a branch of the Divine Life Society and to spread his teachings. Satchidanandaji arrived in Trincomalee in 1953, and Mataji's entire family became Sri Swamiji's devotees. Thus, when Sri Swamiji relocated in 1955, inaugurating the Satchidananda Thapovanam in Kandy, Mataji, who at that time was known as Rajeswari, moved into and took charge of the Thapovanam.

In the same year, on the banks of the Mahaveli Ganga River, flowing alongside the Thapovanam, Rajeswari, born on the 18th of March 1912, became Vimalananda as she was initiated into the Holy Order of Sannyas by her beloved Guru, H. H. Sri Swami Satchidanandaji Maharaj. At this auspicious hour, our beloved "Laughing Mataji" was born.

After serving her beloved Guru devotedly for twenty-one years at the Kandy Thapovanam, Mataji migrated to Coimbatore, India, and continued her service at the Chettipalayam center for nineteen more years.

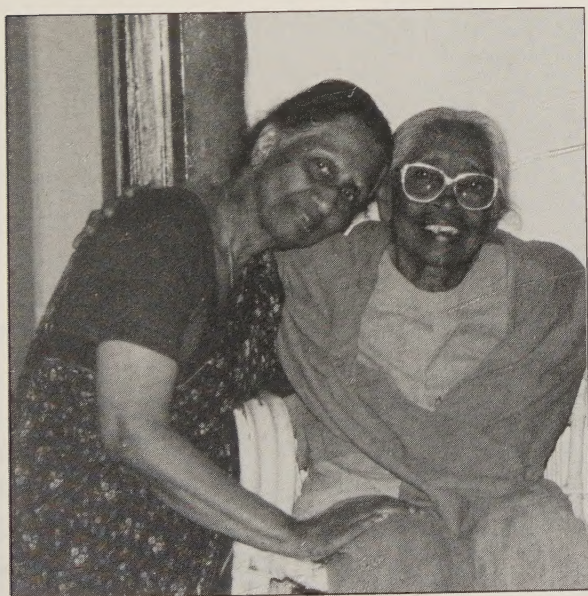
Mataji left her body in Chettipalayam at 2 pm on the 8th of January 1996. ■

*Mataji, all your loved ones will forever be in their hearts the soothing refrain of your heavenly laughter.*

*Pure is the Light of Lights.  
With the radiance of that Light alone all things shine.*



*Sri Gurudev with Swami Vimalananda Ma*



*Srimati Rasiah with her beloved "Laughing Mataji."*



*"It is religion that should help us to understand the spiritual oneness."*

*—Sri Gurudev*

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*—Sri Gurudev*

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*—Sri Gurudev*

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*—Sri Gurudev*

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—Sri Gurudev*

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—Sri Gurudev*

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—Sri Gurudev*

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*"Yoga begins at home."  
—Sri Gurudev*

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